

***SUSTAINABLE DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:
THE CHALLENGE OF SMALL ARMS IN KARAMOJA, UGANDA***

by

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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DECLARATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	iv
<i>Abstract</i>	v
<i>Abbreviations</i>	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
<i>PART I – Small Arms, Light Weapons and Peacebuilding</i>	
CHAPTER 1: <i>The Merging of Security and Development, and the Understanding of Conflict in Africa</i>	22
CHAPTER 2: <i>Small Arms and Light Weapons: Supply Side Policy Responses</i>	59
CHAPTER 3: <i>Arms Control and Practical Disarmament: Demand Side Challenges and Policy Responses</i>	110
<i>PART II – The Karamoja Case Study</i>	
CHAPTER 4: <i>Enduring Legacies: Disarmament and the Sources of Conflict between the British and the Karamojong 1888-1961</i>	111
CHAPTER 5: <i>The Post-Colonial Period: Pastoralism, Small Arms and Disarmament 1961-2003</i>	147
CHAPTER 6: <i>Coming to a Head: the 2001-2002 Disarmament Program</i>	203
CONCLUSION	252
BIBLIOGRAPHY	266
<i>Annex 1: Maps of Karamoja</i>	299
<i>Annex 2: Graphs of the Disarmament Results</i>	301
<i>Annex 3: Confidential List of Interviews (for examiners only)</i>	303

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ABSTRACT

UNIVERSITY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH

THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF PHD

***SUSTAINABLE DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:
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Weapons collection programs have become a critical activity of post-conflict reconstruction, a product of the merging of development and security policy in the post-Cold War era. However, while the discourse of the impact of small arms in developing countries centres on human security, disarmament activities favour the creation of strong states by returning the monopoly of the use of force to the state irrespective of the local norms on gun possession and use. The logic of weapons collection programs thus suffers an incongruity between the referent object to be secured (i.e. individuals) and the actual means of achieving a subjective state of security. Previous literature has favoured the international and national levels of analysis to develop a standard model of micro-disarmament to the detriment of the particular local and gender sensitive context of the programs.

This dissertation will use the case study of the 2001-2002 weapons collection program in Karamoja, Uganda to explore the difficulties of reconciling the creation of a strong central state with the needs of a pastoralist community in East Africa. Based on the current understanding of conflict in Africa and the strategy of peacebuilding amongst external stakeholders, this research will examine to what extent the disarmament program adequately addressed the demand side issues of small arms and light weapons in Karamoja. It questions whether the security needs and perceptions of all stakeholders were met, in particular, the more vulnerable members of the community such as women and children. The objective of the dissertation is to contribute an original and critical analysis of the policy of disarmament programs by examining the utility and limitations of micro-disarmament activities in the peacebuilding and development process in Uganda.

List of Abbreviations

ABEK	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADOL	Action for Development of Local Communities
ASTU	Anti-Stock Theft Unit
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CECORE	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CMOC	Civil-Military Operations Centre
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DC	District Commissioner
DCR	Democratic Republic of Congo
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID	Department For International Development
DRG	World Bank Development Research Group
FAL	Fusil Automatique Léger
FN	Fabrique Nationale
GA	United Nations' General Assembly
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
H&K	Heckler & Koch
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HRDP	Human Rights and Democratisation Programme
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internal Displacement
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IRIN	Integraded Regional Information Networks
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAR	King's African Rifles
KWM	Karamoja Wildlife Management
LC	Local Councillor (followed by level e.g. III sub-county, V county)
LDCs	Lesser Developed Countries
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LMG	Light Machine Gun
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MHS	Mutually Hurting Stalemate
MP	Member of Parliament
NCHWs	Nomadic Community Health Workers
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	National Resistance Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OAS	Organisation of American States

OAU	Organisation of African States
ODA	Official Developmental Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
PCR	Post-Conflict Reconstruction
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SALIGAD	Small Arms and Light Weapons in IGAD countries
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAPs	World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLR	Self-Loading Rifle
SMG	Sub-Machine Gun
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TAE	Tools for Arms
TPDF	Tanzanian People's Defence Force
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAF	Unified Task Force (Somalia)
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda Peoples Defence Force
USA	United States of America
WCP	Weapons Collection Program
WFP	World Food Programme

Background

In the past five years, small arms and light weapons have become a burning issue for international development advocates with headlines such as “The AK-47: The world’s favourite killing machine”, “Almost one in three people affected by gun crime”.¹ Thanks largely to a global campaign by a consortium of over 500 non-governmental organizations in 100 countries, and two major conferences at the United Nations to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, over one million people have signed a petition by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) to stem the trade in firearms.² This thesis will discuss how a traditionally local or national security issue transformed into a major policy concern for development practitioners and why a weapons collections program was adopted as a seemingly appropriate policy solution to the proliferation of small arms in the sub-region of Karamoja, Uganda.³

I suggest that the concept and practice of peacebuilding and human security were products of a changing global strategic environment, after the end of the Cold War, in which there was a merger of development and security concerns. Scholars such as Mark Duffield and Alex de Waal criticized relief aid as being the predominant response to

¹ Broadly speaking, small arms are those weapons designed for personal use, and light weapons are designed for use by several people. Revolvers and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine guns; assault rifles; and light machine guns, may be categorized as small arms, while light weapons are: heavy machine guns; hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launcher; portable anti-aircraft guns; portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles; and portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems. This study will use the terms arms, small arms, small arms and light weapons, firearms, and weapons interchangeably. Control Arms Campaign, *Almost One in Three People Affected by Gun Crime* [website] (Control Arms Campaign, 2006 [accessed 16 September 2006]); available from:

http://www.controlarms.org/latest_news/guncrimesurvey-pr190606.htm, Oliver Sprague and Hugh Griffiths, "The AK-47: The world's favourite killing machine," (Control Arms Campaign, 2006).

² For more information about IANSA and the United Nations’ “Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects” in July 2001 and the more recent July 2006 “Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons”, see <http://www.iansa.org> or <http://www.controlarms.org>

³ The terms weapons reduction programs, micro-disarmament, practical disarmament, and weapons collection programs, will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation to mean a small arms and light weapons disarmament program.

conflict.⁴ They discussed the inclusion of development aid within a more comprehensive strategy, including foreign and security policies, in order “to prevent, mitigate or resolve violent conflict”.⁵ Similarly, a series of important documents, including: “An Agenda for Peace” (1992), the “Human Development Report” (1994), and the “OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Guidelines” (1997) presented new ideas and programming priorities such as ‘conflict management’, ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘human security’.⁶ Later documents such as the “Supplement to an Agenda for Peace” (1995) and “GA Resolutions 51/45” (1996) made the link between small arms, security and development, while introducing the concept of micro-disarmament.⁷ It was in this context, that weapons collection programs have become an integral activity of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding initiatives based on the assumption that micro-disarmament increases security and can contribute to the development efforts of societies flooded by the uncontrolled proliferation of arms.⁸

Research Question, Hypothesis, Arguments

The primary research question of this dissertation asks “What are the intended and unintended effects of practical disarmament on a pastoralist community in Uganda?” The aim is to better understand the utility claims and limitations of micro-disarmament activities in the process of peacebuilding and development. The study thus investigates the relationship between the state, and the pastoralists in this particularly state-centric

⁴ Alex de Waal, ed., *Demilitarizing the Mind: African agendas for peace and security* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002), Mark Duffield, "Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid," *Disasters*, 25, no. 4 (2001).

⁵ Jonathan Goodhand, *A synthesis report: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Nepal and Sri Lanka*, vol. 1, *Conflict Assessments* (London: The Conflict, Security and Development Group. Centre for Defence Studies, 2001) pg12.

⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping: Report of the Secretary-General," (New York: United Nations, 1992), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict, International development* (Paris: OECD, 2001), United Nations Development Programme., *Human development report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1994).

⁷ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations," (New York: United Nations, 1995), United Nations General Assembly, "Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures," (United Nations General Assembly, 1996).

⁸ Robert Muggah, "No Magic Bullet: A Critical Perspective on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Weapons Reduction in Post-Conflict Contexts," *The Round Table*, 94, no. 379 (2005).

intervention. I argue that the existing literature favours the international and national levels of analysis leading to the development of a standard model of micro-disarmament to the detriment of the particular local and gender-sensitive context of the programs. This study seeks to question whether weapons collection programs, as they are presently conceived and implemented, improve the perception and experience of security for individuals and pastoralist communities in East Africa, in particular for the women and young men of Karamoja. The thesis seeks to determine whether micro-disarmament can sufficiently address the demand side issues of small arms and light weapons in the region. And it questions what implications this might have for future attempts at weapons collection in other developing countries.

Relegating structural causes of conflict to background conditions and concentrating on proximate causes of conflict has favoured political interventions of short duration, thus focussing on crisis reaction rather than prevention. This thesis argues that micro-disarmament provides an example of highly visible, short-term reactive activity, which is much easier to complete rather than creating a more normative preventive consensus on the sale and use of small arms at the international level. Since the early 1990s, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) have been interpreted and understood to mean state-building, of a benign, functioning liberal-democracy. In most cases, the activities of PCR favour the creation of a strong state. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR), and the establishment of the rule of law, all have the aim of centralizing power and the monopoly of the use of force within the state.⁹ I suggest that this may be problematic, because state-building is the construction of a particular kind of social order. State-building is a response to the perception of a breakdown of social (dis)order, or "state failure". This limits both the interpretations of conflict and the causes of conflict. It assumes an objective view of conflict. However, conflict is necessarily subjective like all other social interactions, with many differing points of view. The homogeneous solutions silence the voices of different stakeholders, favouring state-centric solutions.

⁹ Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, "Security Sector Reform: Bringing the private in," *Conflict, Development and Security*, 6, no. 1 (2006), Winrich Kuhne (ed.), "Proceedings from the 3rd International Workshop Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures and Control of Small Arms: From Civil War to Civil Society" (Berlin, 2-4 July 1998), Sverre Lodgaard (ed.), "Proceedings from the conference Practical Disarmament" (Oslo, 9-10 May 2001).

Thus an obvious point of contention in peacebuilding is the difficulty in trying to achieve the subjective state of “feeling secure” through state-building activities such as weapons collection programs. For example, it is conceivable that because of cultural norms, objective realities (no police station nearby), subjective interpretations (the state is not benign, not interested in fulfilling its social contract of providing security), history, etc. that keeping weapons may be preferable to surrendering them to the state and/or a third party. In order for micro-disarmament initiatives to be sustainable locally these different points of view need to be accommodated. In practice, this could mean instead of collection and destruction of arms, that the illegal weapons are legalized through the formation of militias under control of local communities, institutions of the state, or arms control instead of disarmament (e.g. allowing non-military weapons, limited to one per voting person).

Introduction to the Karamoja Region

The Karamoja sub-region lies in North-Eastern Uganda bordering the Sudan to the North, Kenya to the East, and several Ugandan districts to the West.¹⁰ Karamoja covers a semi-arid area of 27,000 km², approximately the size of Belgium. It is divided into three administrative districts, Moroto, Kotido and Nakapiripirit; the districts are further divided into counties, which roughly correspond to the main clans of the Karamojong tribe: Dodoth, Jie, Labwor, Bokora, Matheniko, Pian, Chekwii and Pokot (who constitute a separate tribe).¹¹ Approximately 700,000 people live in the sub-region and share a similar language and lifestyle.

¹⁰ ‘Karamoja/Karamojong’ is also written as ‘Karimoja/Karimojong’ in the literature, but will be consistently spelt as the former throughout the thesis, except where quoting sources which chose the latter spelling.

¹¹ There is some anthropological debate as to whether the different social groupings in the Karamoja sub-region constitute separate tribes or clans of the same tribe. This study will refer to them as clans, since the communities share the same Nilo-Hamitic ethno-historical background, speak the same vernacular and share a similar lifestyle and belief system. The Turkana, who mainly live in Kenya, and share the same traits mentioned above, however, are categorized in the literature as a separate tribe, and thus will be referred to as such in this study. The Pokot or Suk people, who live in Kenya and Uganda, also constitute a separate tribe from the Karamojong as they belong to the Kalenjin language group of the Southern Nilotic tribes. In popular sources, such as newspaper articles, the agro-pastoralists of the region are often all referred to as the ‘Karamojong’, without distinguishing the tribes/clans. For the purpose of brevity, this study will adopt the term ‘Karamojong’ to refer to the various agro-pastoralist tribes and clans who live in the Karamojong sub-region. Bruno Novelli, *Aspects of Karimojong Ethnosociology*, vol. 44, *Museum Combonianum* (Verona, Italy: Novastampa, 1988), Augusto Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects*

The majority of the Karamojong society leads an agro-pastoralist lifestyle. The frequency of drought and limited annual rainfall have encouraged a semi-nomadic existence in order to cope with the periodic scarcity of natural resources such as water and pasture land. While the Karamojong engage in some basic subsistence agriculture of crops including millet and sorghum, the main focus of their spiritual, economic and social life revolves around the breeding and keeping of cattle. Their way of life has created conflict with past governments, as attempts to settle and "civilize" the community have been resisted. Beginning with the British colonial administration, state policies towards the pastoralists have varied from neglect and containment, from closing off the sub-region to other districts in Uganda and Kenya, to the forced "modernization" by introducing cotton as a cash crop by Idi Amin and the banning the traditional clothing - the *suka*. The present government has attempted more modest development efforts through the creation of the Karamoja Development Agency. However, Karamoja remains a relatively under-serviced, underdeveloped zone of Uganda, beset by general insecurity and several layers of conflict.

The levels of conflict in the region are three-fold: Firstly, intra-tribal between the various major clans such as the Bokora, Matheniko, Dodoth and Jie; secondly, inter-tribal with their neighbours in Uganda (the Acholi, Sabiny, Langi and Itesot), and with other pastoralist tribes in neighbouring countries such as the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya and the Toposi and Didinga of Sudan; and finally, conflict with the state, especially when the army, the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF), responds to cattle raids or is forced to implement government policy, notably the disarmament program. The conflicts in Karamoja are widely misunderstood; the violence is generally not politically motivated and targeted towards the state, as is the case of the Lord's Resistance Army (a rebel movement active in Northern Uganda). Nor is the violence sustained. Rather it reveals a pattern of large sporadic clashes, mostly between clans or against neighbours, followed by an overwhelming and disproportionate use of force by the state to calm the crisis situation down. The lack of presence of the state (in the form of the police or border controls) and the proximity to rebel movements in Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan

(Bolgonà, Italy: EMI, 1982), E.J. Wayland, "Preliminary Studies of the Tribes of Karamoja," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 61 (1931).

have facilitated criminal activities such as arms smuggling, commercial cattle raiding and banditry on the roads. These activities, primarily motivated by economic demands, have resulted in a very negative stereotype of the Karamojong amongst other Ugandans.

Weapons and a warrior culture have a long history in the Karamoja sub-region. Small arms have a historical presence in East Africa dating back to Arab, Swahili and European traders in the 18th century, but until about the 1950s, the most widespread weapons tended to be sticks, spears, bows and arrows.¹² As various neighbouring tribes acquired firearms in the 1970s, home made guns and then modern weapons such as the AK-47, G3, SMG (sub-machine gun), SLR (self-loading rifle), LMG (light machine gun) and pistols became commonplace.¹³ Due to the pastoralists' lifestyle, which historically entailed self-defence against external actors including the state, weapons (and now guns) are intimately related to notions of ideal masculinity and cultural identity. Weapons are also symbolic of the independence and defiance of the Karamojong towards the state. Originally a colonial project to pacify pastoralists of the region, state-organized weapons collection programs have been attempted six times.¹⁴ Largely unsuccessful, they became a part of the process of the marginalisation of pastoral regions. Relations between the Karamojong and the state failed to improve in the post-independence era, as the subsequent governments have continued to pursue the original colonial policy of settling the semi-nomadic communities, rather than viewing pastoralism as an economically viable way of life. Today, Karamoja is further marginalized in legal, economical, and security terms by the structures of the Ugandan state. A laissez-faire development policy in pastoralist areas, punctuated by short-term interventions, has resulted in chronic underdevelopment, indicated by the dismal human development indicators of the region.

The government of Uganda originally hailed the most recent disarmament program in Karamoja, as a major development initiative, adopting much of the contemporary discourse on small arms reduction. However, I argue that the government's

¹² Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Time-line Showing the Genesis of Armed Cattle Raiding, Insecurity and the Establishment of Vigilantes* ([accessed 13 June 2003]); available from: http://www.karamojadata.org/history_guns_inkaramoja/htm.

¹³ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Special Report - Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights," (Kampala: Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2004).

¹⁴ Karamoja Data Centre, *The Disarmament Process in Karamoja* [website] (Karamoja Data Centre, 2003 [accessed 15 September 2004]); available from: <http://www.karamojadata.org/disarmament.htm#Relaunching%20of%20the%20disarmament%20exercise>.

motivation to disarm the pastoralists in 2001-2002 was primarily to diffuse an immediate internal political crisis, not to improve the security or development conditions of the Karamojong community. The political crisis was precipitated in March 2000 after particularly destructive attacks perpetrated by armed Karamojong displaced approximately 56,000 people in neighbouring districts,¹⁵ and thus the Government of Uganda reacted to the public outcry by initiating a weapons collection program. The scheme was organized and implemented by the central government and army; there was little involvement of international donors or actors such as the United Nations Development Programme, who have significant expertise in planning, funding and executing disarmament strategies. The weapons collection program was initiated with a voluntary period from December 2001 until February 2002, after which the UPDF army began to disarm forcibly the Karamojong. There was no conclusive end to the period of forceful disarmament, as the UPDF became embroiled elsewhere in an offensive against the rebel LRA throughout the spring and summer of 2002. By the end of that year, the government largely abandoned the disarmament of the Karamojong. However, it has recently re-launched a 'Cordon and Search' operation after seven UPDF soldiers were killed during two days of armed clashes with the pastoralists in July 2005.¹⁶ This case study will examine the relevant history of the Karamojong and state from 1888 until the present day. It will restrict the analysis of the 2001 disarmament program to the end of 2003.¹⁷

An original contribution to the existing literature

While there are several articles or reports examining the 2001-2002 weapons collection program in Karamoja, most were written shortly after the completion of the initial voluntary period, or did not include analysis of the effects of the Ugandan army's withdrawal in the region due to a major military offensive against the Lord's Resistance

¹⁵ These areas are also affected by incursions by the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group operating out of Northern Uganda; however the Internally Displaced Persons were attributed to Karamojong attacks. At the time, Karamoja was suffering from famine and two years of drought. "Karamojong neighbours recovering," *UN OCHA Humanitarian Update Uganda*, 2, no. 4 (2000).

¹⁶ Grace Matsiko and Emmanuel Mulondo, "Karamoja Disarmament On," *The Monitor*, 2 July 2006, Frank Nyakairu, "Soldier Shoots Off Boy's Testicles," *The Monitor*, 1 July 2006, "Uganda: Nineteen killed as army, warriors clash in northeast," *IRIN*, 18 July 2005, "Uganda: Operation to seize guns underway in northeast," *IRIN*, 4 April 2006.

¹⁷ This is for the purpose of data collection and analysis as the disarmament program is currently on-going.

Army.¹⁸ Many attribute the precarious security situation in North-eastern Uganda to a proliferation of weapons and the raiding lifestyle of the pastoralists. Such a limited analysis reduces the complexity of the ecological, social, economic and political crisis in Karamoja; it suggests that the arms supplied and in circulation must simply be collected and that the pastoralists ought to be 'civilized' through sedentary development initiatives.¹⁹ In other cases, the existing literature points to a failure in the implementation of the disarmament directive; the focus remains on 'lessons learned' as though weapons collection programs are an apolitical, technical intervention in a society that can be replicated regardless of the local history, gun culture, and security needs of the community.²⁰

In contrast, with a case study on Karamoja, I felt that I could make an original contribution to the empirical body of literature on practical disarmament in several ways. First, by conducting an in-depth study on the history of relations between the pastoralist communities and the Ugandan state, demonstrating that current disarmament efforts are resisted as part of an on-going social and political crisis between the state and Karamojong society. This thesis provides a new and original manner of understanding the challenges and stakes of small arms in pastoralist societies in East Africa through a "bottom up" or participatory analysis, in order to inform other enquiries of past and

¹⁸ Action for Development of Local Communities, "The Karamojong Response to Disarmament: 6 months later," (Kampala: ADOL, 2002), Pearl Chin and Marlene Siedlarz, "Small Arms and Light Weapons: The Problem of Guns in Karamoja and the Legal Aspects of Disarmament," (University of Illinois, College of Law, 2003), *The Disarmament Process in Karamoja* [website] (Karamoja Data Centre, 2005 [accessed 27 April 2005]); available from:

www.karamojadata.org/disarmament.htm#/Relaunching%20of%the%20disarmament%20exercise, Nathalie Gomes and Kennedy Mkutu, "Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Building local capacity for peace and development in Karamoja, Uganda," (The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and Pax Christi Netherlands, 2003), Ben Knighton, "The State as Raider among the Karamojong: 'where there are no guns they use the threat of guns'," *Africa*, 73, no. 3 (2003), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict*, Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights.", United Nations Development Programme., *Human development report 1994*, Robert Walker, "Anti-pastoralism and the growth of poverty and insecurity in Karamoja: Disarmament and development dilemmas," (A Report for DFID East Africa (Uganda), 2002).

¹⁹ *The Disarmament Process in Karamoja* ([accessed]), Capt. Asingura Kagoro, "The Disarmament Program in Uganda with Special Focus on the Karamoja Case: Approaches, Methods and Outcomes," (2002), Kennedy Mkutu, "Pastoral conflict and small arms: The Kenya-Uganda border region," (London: Saferworld, 2003), Anders Narman, "Karamoja: Is Peace Possible?" *Review of African Political Economy*, 95 (2003), "Uganda: Focus on Karamoja disarmament," *IRIN*, January 10 2002.

²⁰ Gomes and Mkutu, "Breaking the Cycle of Violence.", Kagoro, "The Disarmament Program in Uganda.", Knighton, "The State as Raider among the Karamojong."

future attempts at disarmament in the region.²¹ Although the pastoralist communities in East Africa differ, many of the micro-disarmament initiatives have been analogous in design. Thus, it is probable that the Karamoja experience has relevance and policy implications for similar interventions in pastoralist communities of the region.

Secondly, this study seeks to question existing assumptions about the utility and limitations of weapons collection programs as a development and conflict prevention tool, linking it to wider themes and debates in the peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction literature. Almost all of the existing literature on peacebuilding and human security infers a causality between disarmament and an improvement in human security and thus to development.²² Much of this thinking stems from the experience of United Nations peacekeeping operations and agencies working in post-conflict environments, where a supply-oriented approach to removing weapons has a noticeable effect on the ability of warring parties to disrupt a (negotiated) peace outcome.²³ This idea was summarized in the influential 1999 *Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*:

The abundance of armaments available to conflicting parties, especially small arms and light weapons, is a major contributing factor to the number and intensity of armed conflicts around the globe, as well as to violations of signed peace agreements.²⁴

Later documents expanded the supposed benefits of a supply-side logic of disarmament to espouse their conflict prevention capabilities:

²¹ I consider this study to be 'participatory' in that it did not solely depend on published reports, and interviews with 'experts' of disarmament. It attempted to engage with local residents from a variety of backgrounds, including those with no official title or position.

²² Boutros-Ghali, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace 1995.", Commission on Human Security., *Human Security Now* (New York: 2003), United Nations General Assembly, "A/RES/51/45 N."

²³ Jeremy King, "Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation A Hindrance to Peace: Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in Post-Conflict Peace Processes," *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, 26, no. 4/5 Double Issue (1997), Edward Laurance, "Surplus Weapons and the MicroDisarmament Process," (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 1999), Claire Pike and Mark Taylor (ed.), "Proceedings from the Forum Swords for Ploughshares: Microdisarmament in Transition from Conflict" (Montreal, Canada, 21-22 September 1999), Joanna Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions in the Aftermath of Civil War: Key Implementation Issues," *Civil Wars*, 2, no. 2 (1999), United Nations General Assembly, "General and complete disarmament: consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures," (United Nations General Assembly, 1997).

²⁴ Kofi A. Annan, "Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (United Nations Security Council, 1999), pg17.

The de-weaponization of conflict-prone societies is therefore an important conflict prevention exercise...the destruction and disposal of such stocks can help to prevent conflict or its reoccurrence by reducing the volume in circulation and the easy availability of such arms.²⁵

However, the benefits of disarmament programs were mostly based on the deductions drawn from three types of weapons collection strategies: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), weapons 'buy-back', and 'weapons for development' programs; all of which are based on a voluntary, incentive-based approach to disarmament.²⁶ Very little of current literature on micro-disarmament or peacebuilding has studied the effects of coercive disarmament programs on human security and peacebuilding. The contemporary debates fail to assign agency to local stakeholders. One has the sense, in reading the literature on conflict and peacebuilding, that civilians are always subjugated to situations of conflict as victims; there is little suggestion or discussion that people are stakeholders in the conflict and may have interests in condoning, participating or even causing armed conflict.²⁷ The 2002 Small Arms Survey noted, "collecting weapons is essential but not alone sufficient to sustainably promote peace and security, unless the demand for weapons is simultaneously addressed."²⁸ This study provides a contribution to the understanding of the utility and limitations of micro-disarmament programs by

²⁵ Kofi A. Annan, "Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Prevention of Conflict," (United Nations General Assembly, 2001), pg22.

²⁶ The typologies of weapons reduction programs will be discussed in greater detail in Ch 3. Lionel Cliffe, William Godnick, and Mandy Turner, "Assessing and reviewing the impact of small arms projects on arms availability and poverty," in *Armed Violence and Poverty Initiative* (Bradford, UK: Centre for International Cooperation and Security, 2005), Jeremy Ginifer, Mike Bourne, and Owen Greene, "Considering armed violence in the post-conflict transition: DDR and small arms and light weapons reduction initiatives," in *Armed Violence and Poverty Initiative* (Bradford, UK: Centre for International Cooperation and Security, 2004), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict* pg136-42.

²⁷ An exception to this tendency is the literature on political economies of conflict, especially the role of warlords, and the 'Greed vs. Grievance' debate. Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and World Bank Development Research Group., *Greed and grievance in civil war? Policy research working paper; 2355* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000), Neil Cooper, "State Collapse as Business: The Role of Conflict Trade and the Emerging Control Agenda," *Development and Change*, 33, no. 5 (2002), Mark Duffield, *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2001), William Reno, *Warlord politics and African states* (Boulder, CO: Lynner Rienner Publishers, 1998), Necla Tschergi, "Political Economy of Armed Conflicts and Peacebuilding," *Conflict, Development and Security*, 4, no. 3 (2004).

²⁸ Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the human cost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pg297.

focusing on the reasons for the demand of small arms in Karamoja, and what effects an essentially coercive weapons collection program had on the citizens of the sub-region.

Research Design and Methodology

This study attempts to examine the use of a weapons collection program as a peacebuilding and development policy from a hermeneutic standpoint, in which the focus of the analysis is the social and historical conditions to which disarmament is linked for the various stakeholders, including the local communities, state representatives, and international actors, such as donors. A hermeneutic ontology was adopted based on my belief that the study of International Relations, as all social sciences, is not value-free, because the assumptions and values of the investigator colour the analysis of the phenomena in question.²⁹ I am mindful that such an approach is not without its critics:

Positivistically-minded critics...have held that the method of interpretative understanding may be a useful adjunct to social science, as a source of 'hypotheses' about conduct, but that such hypotheses have to be confirmed by other, less impressionistic descriptions of behaviour.³⁰

However, this thesis makes no claim to be objective or *explanatory* but rather it seeks to *understand* the use of the policy of micro-disarmament in a local situation.³¹ Furthermore, it is hoped that a Weberian approach could avoid the "scientific detachment (that) results in social scientists imposing their conception of the way social processes operate upon the object in question" in order to provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of how development and security might eventually be achieved not only theoretically, but also practically in North-eastern Uganda.³² Logically, this presupposes a normative or political agenda to this research, however it must be stated from the outset that this is not the primary aim of this study, which is simply to comprehend why and

²⁹ The term 'hermeneutic' is used interchangeably with an 'interpretative' or a 'Weberian' approach. Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (London: Hutchinson, 1976).

³⁰ Ibid. pg55.

³¹ For an introduction to the differences between *understanding* and *explaining* international relations, see Chapter 3 & 4, Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

³² Mark J. Smith, *Social Science in Question* (London: Sage, 1998) pg172.

how a policy of disarmament was used to further the aims of peacebuilding and development in a particular location and what effects this policy had on the society.³³

A case study method was used in the research design for this project as a means of “investigating empirically a complex, unique, and critical social phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly discernible; and where multiple sources of evidence are used”.³⁴ As “the interpretative approach is the systemic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds”,³⁵ it was felt that a single case study would provide a deeper, more substantive understanding than a comparison between two or more case studies given the limited time, resources and space constraints of this thesis.³⁶ Hence while a cross-unit analysis might have provided a better basis for generalising and theorising, that was not the aim or intention of this study, nor where I desire to make an original contribution to the existing literature on small arms disarmament and development. It is hoped however, that this thesis shall provide a different and original means of understanding the issue of small arms proliferation in pastoralist societies in East Africa, by casting the problem not only as one of supply and demand of weapons, but as an issue of state-society relations. Thus, highlighting the incongruity of framing the small arms debate in the language and discourse of human security (where the individual is the referent subject to be secured), while favouring a state-centric solution to the quagmire (i.e. micro-disarmament, which returns the monopoly of the use of force to the state).

The case study methodology is not without its weaknesses. One author noted that the case study methodology risks being unrepresentative, lacking in rigour, and is subjective to the researcher’s biases.³⁷ These critiques will be dealt with in turn. The first

³³ The biases of the author and study will be dealt with in greater detail further on in this section. The normative bias of the research would be to improve the perception and experience of security for all members of the community in the Karamoja sub-region, including the neighbouring tribes and the representatives of the state of Uganda.

³⁴ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 4th ed. (London: Allyn and Bacon, 2000) pg148, R. K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1984) pg3, 23.

³⁵ Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* pg71.

³⁶ This case study covers a span of 115 years and multiple attempts at disarmament in Karamoja.

³⁷ Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* pg21.

critique supposes that there is a norm, one type of case study which is representative of all societies that have been disarmed. A hermeneutic approach would question the validity of this assumption as the social and historical contexts of each case are unique. Moreover, at this point in time the limited number of in-depth scholarly studies on states and societies that have undergone disarmament impedes any attempts of knowledge claims as to what is the typical experience of disarmament, if any.³⁸ The state of the literature is such that, scholars are still debating the typology of weapons collection programs, for example post-conflict situations such as disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) programs as opposed to generalised conflict situations.³⁹ Only recently have scholars attempted to organize the research on firearms into a discipline called 'Small Arms Studies'.⁴⁰

The second critique of a case study methodology relates to the rigour of the data collection techniques. During the period of research, I collected a variety of primary and secondary sources including: scholarly books, journal articles, conference papers, reports, videos, photographic material, and other unpublished material including a wide range of documents from international organisations, bilateral donors and governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). I also amassed a collection of over 200 relevant newspaper articles and editorials from various broadsheets in the region and abroad, dating from the late 1960s to the present day. These materials included both print and electronic sources, in a variety of languages including English, French, and Italian. The breadth of the sources also stemmed from the cross-disciplinary nature of the case study, which included: animal husbandry, anthropology, environmental sciences, gender studies, history, law, linguistics, political science, and sociology. The depth of the data collected exposed some interesting 'distortions' particularly in the secondary sources, including misquotes of original texts, wildly changing historical narratives, and the recycling of

³⁸ The Small Arms Survey (published annually since 2001), the CICS-AVPI series, and the UNIDIR series on participatory reviews of weapons collection programs have attempted to publish academically rigorous analysis of various disarmament programs. See also Joseph Di Chiaro III and Sami Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War: Micro-disarmament as an Element of Peace-building* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2001).

³⁹ This topic will be treated in greater depth in Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ The first Small Arms Studies planning conference called 'Small Arms and Light Weapons: From a New Challenge to a New Field of Research', was organized by Temple University and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation at Columbia University, in New York, on July 9-10, 2005.

unverifiable facts.⁴¹ Neuman suggests that the phenomenon of “bowdlerisation”, that can affect documents, is “the deliberate distortion designed to protect moral standards or furnish a particular image”, in essence to represent pre-constructed data.⁴² This is probably due to the troubles of conducting field work in the region, the difficulty in finding reliable and up-to-date printed sources of information on Karamoja, and popular bias against pastoralists and their lifestyle.

Primary research for the case study was conducted over a three and a half month period, between September-December 2003 in Uganda and Kenya, during which time I conducted participant observation, 74 semi-structured interviews with individuals, and groups in: Nairobi, Kenya; Kampala; Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit Districts in Uganda. The interviewees included Ministers, Members of Parliament, District level representatives, civil servants, journalists, activists in community-based organizations (CBOs), NGO workers (both local and international), members of security institutions (the army, intelligence services, militias), diplomats, and individuals from all of the major clans and tribes within the Karamoja sub-region. Due to the politically sensitive nature of the topic treated, few of the interviewees wished to be identified; others did not wish to be quoted. Still, a select few, such as the Ministers, wished to make public declarations on behalf of the Government of Uganda; where they have allowed, their name and position have been used. For all others, their name and other identifiable indicators have been kept anonymous in order to ethically protect my sources. Sources were coded: ADM - for civil servants, and Ministers in the government; CIV – for civilians; NGO – for interviewees from non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations; OTHER – for journalists, researchers, diplomats and development specialists; SEC – for members of the security institutions in Uganda, including the UPDF, intelligence services, and militias. An appendix for the dissertation examiners will be made available; it will include the name, position, institution, of the interviewee, along with the place of interview and date. Further informal discussions and personal communications were exchanged with development practitioners at a variety of

⁴¹ It should be noted that some of the worst offenders are non-Ugandan publications, primarily when there was an advocacy agenda for the publication. For example, the number of guns circulating in the sub-region.

⁴² Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* pg398, 401.

conferences in: Halifax, Canada; London, England; The Hague, Netherlands; New York, USA; and Paris, France between the periods of July 2001 and May 2006.

Three data collection techniques were used during my fieldwork. In the first instance, participant observation, “watching, listening, and noting” was a helpful technique in learning about social relations in the pastoralist communities.⁴³ As an ‘outsider’, someone not a party to the conflict or society,⁴⁴ there were many power structures to observe, including the interactions between men and women, the generations, elected vs. customary leaders, civil-military relations, rural and urban dwellers, regional vs. central authorities, educated and illiterate, etc. Much of the information gleaned was unavailable through printed sources, especially as some anthropological reports proved to be outdated. These observations later served as very useful points of inquiry during the interviewing process. For all interviews, a semi-structured approach was taken. This entailed an initial prepared list of questions, administered to similar types of respondents (in order to gauge their honesty, openness, and familiarity with the subject matter), coupled with a certain flexibility, to allow me to pursue interesting answers through a ‘dialogue’. Most interviews occurred with a single respondent. However, 6 group interviews were conducted in the traditional manner of a ‘town hall’ meeting under an acacia tree. These group interviews involved between 10 and 40 participants, from the various social groupings, such as the *ngikasikou* (male elders), *ngaberu* (married women), and *ngikaracuna* (youth warriors). Further group interviews with a smaller number of homogenous interviewees of either *ngaberu* or *ngikaracuna* followed as the ‘acacia tree meetings’ were usually dominated by prominent male community members.

All of the group interviews were translated from *Akaramojong*, the local vernacular by a translator.⁴⁵ Whilst accurate translations can be a source of methodological concern, care was taken to pursue important lines of inquiry in several manners, and a second person (my guide, who was from a different clan) was always on

⁴³ Ibid. pg361-2.

⁴⁴ Tamar Hermann, "The Impermeable Identity Wall: The Study of Violent Conflicts by 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders'," in *Researching Violently Divided Societies*, ed. Marie Smyth and Gillian Robinson (London: Pluto Press, 2001).

⁴⁵ The majority of the individual interviews were conducted in English, in rare instances an individual interview occurred in *Akaramojong*.

hand to clarify, correct, or find a consensual translation. Overall, the interviews were an extremely important part of the primary research as they provided new and unpublished information, such as motivations, feelings, values, attitudes and perceptions towards the state/pastoralists and disarmament. And secondly, the interviews acted as a means of triangulating and updating information gathered through other data collection techniques.⁴⁶ The cross-checking of information acquired during interviews also occurred, as some respondents intentionally gave false information or were misleading, or as is often the case in oral societies, the spatial and temporal recollections were difficult to pinpoint.

A third critique of the case study methodology is researcher bias. This is perhaps an epistemological point of contention, as a hermeneutic approach refutes the notion of absolute objectivity in social inquiry and the construction of knowledge.⁴⁷ Thus, it is argued that both the research data and the researcher's analysis are necessarily subjective, particularly when viewed from the perspective of power relations.⁴⁸ However, the feminist standpoint theorist Donna Haraway warns against the dangers of relativism: "Relativism is a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally." "Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see".⁴⁹ Advocates of an interpretative ontology encourage researcher reflexivity, or introspection, as a means of achieving intellectual rigour and honesty in scholarly research.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* pg125.

⁴⁷ Advocates of hermeneutics such as Wilhem Dilthey, would go even further stating that we must recognize the problem of the hermeneutic circle: 'The whole of a work must be understood from individual words and their combination but full understanding of an individual part presupposes understanding of the whole.' In other words, "all mental constructs are historically and socially specific and hence prone to change as part of the web of cultural forms". Smith, *Social Science in Question* pg161.

⁴⁸ Foucault suggests that social research unavoidably replicates the power relations between the researcher and the Subject, due to the researcher's preconceived values and specific identity. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry*, 8, no. 4 (1982).

⁴⁹ Andrew Findlay, "Reflexivity and the Dilemmas of Identification: An Ethnographic Encounter in Northern Ireland," in *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, ed. Marie Smyth and Gillian Robinson (London: Pluto Press, 2001), pg69.

⁵⁰ They do not however, make claims to absolute truth, unlike their positivist counterparts.

I felt that reflexivity was especially salient for several reasons. Firstly, because social research has a purpose in society and this study in particular has policy implications that may affect the security and well-being of the people of Karamoja.⁵¹ Secondly, because my 'normative and attitudinal neutrality' delineated the subject of inquiry, and the research design, my analytic style as a researcher was axiomatic to the social 'reality' that I constituted.⁵² In other words, there is no pre-existing 'reality' that is independent from my attempts to describe and analyse it.⁵³ Lastly, my own identity, values and experiences were problematic during my field research, causing me to re-examine my relations to the subject and my motivations for the study. Three concrete examples can be given. I attempted to approach Karamojong culture and a pastoralist lifestyle with an open-mind, despite much written literature to the contrary, that the pastoralist society was 'uncivilized' and 'backwards'. After my first extended stay in the sub-region, sleeping on the ground with rats, eating one protein-based meal a day supplemented by liquid meals of cow blood and sorghum-beer, and most significantly, observing the accepted banality of violence, I suffered a physical shutdown and psychologically began to despise the society I was studying.⁵⁴ My second shock later was to discover, in the course of interviewing locals, that several *ngikasikou* (male elders) suggested that the region would be better off if the British returned to colonize them all! This challenged my pre-conceived notions of post-colonial subjects,⁵⁵ forcing me to re-examine my own assumptions about the society in question.

Lastly, how I was perceived by others greatly contributed to my interaction with members of Karamojong society. In the study of societies in conflict, Tamer Hermann suggests that 'insiders' or those who are a member of a socio-political group involved in the conflict and a local resident are primarily advantaged in the first stage of data gathering as they are:

⁵¹ This is of course, assuming that the findings of this study are shared and debated by others.

⁵² Hermann, "The Impermeable Identity Wall: The Study of Violent Conflicts by 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders'," pg78.

⁵³ Findlay, "Reflexivity and the Dilemmas of Identification," pg67.

⁵⁴ I witnessed young children kicking dogs, older children hitting younger ones, mothers beating children, men battering their wives, and men shooting between themselves. It took me a long time to understand and contextualize the banality of violence in Karamojong society in a way which did not diminish my desire to continue researching the case study.

⁵⁵ I assumed that the citizens of present day Uganda were happy to be rid of the colonial administration and preferred to live in an independent country.

...best qualified for gathering the hard data on their own side: they are proficient in the language, familiar with the socio-cultural and political contexts, have detailed and sometimes first-hand information regarding relevant events, and have incompatible access to primary resources and informants.

On the other hand, Hermann suggests that 'insiders' are disadvantaged in the later stages of analysis and dissemination of findings.⁵⁶ Very clearly, I was an 'outsider' with all of the benefits and impediments that such a status entails. However, my identity was an ambiguous source of amusement for many people I met and affected how they interacted with me.⁵⁷ Most local residents in Karamoja had never seen an East Asian looking person before; I was obviously not 'white' (or perceived to be Western), but nor was I 'black' or 'African'. I was young, female, and unmarried, which in local society would confer a lower social status, certainly not one where I would be permitted to speak in a public forum. For Ugandan officials, especially members of the security agencies, my identity was less important than my intentions. Was I a journalist? A human rights investigator? Did I represent an NGO? What was the purpose of my research? Despite having a national research permit and letters of permission to interview and research in the Karamojong districts, several impediments were organized. On one occasion, I found myself in a Kampala gossip tabloid,⁵⁸ falsely accused of public displays of affection with a known opposition journalist; a kind of character assassination. On another occasion, I was followed by a government minder for a week, preventing me from meeting anyone but government officials. These are anecdotal accounts of some of the experiences which contributed to my reflexivity as a researcher and ultimately, why this study could not be approached from anything but a hermeneutic standpoint.

⁵⁶ Hermann, "The Impermeable Identity Wall: The Study of Violent Conflicts by 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders'."

⁵⁷ Conversations were had about how many heads of cattle I would be worth; not very many it turns out, I was too small (child-like figure), and probably not very hardy for the difficult household tasks.

⁵⁸ "Seen Around Town", The Red Pepper Newspaper, 6 November, 2003.

Overview of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part sets the context for how the small arms issue is debated amongst international development and security practitioners. What is the 'problem', how is it conceived and in what literature is the discussion on the proliferation of small arms situated. The second part of the study examines the case study of Karamoja, Uganda, where the battle to control guns between the pastoralist communities and the state has raged from the late-19th century until the present day. Each part of the thesis is then subdivided into three chapters.

Chapter 1 argues that the concepts and practices of peacebuilding and human security were products of a changing global strategic environment. The appearance of these two terms coincided with end of the Cold War, which permitted a rethinking in the field of strategic studies, widening the concerns of intellectuals beyond their foci on nuclear war and strategy. Development assistance on the other hand, also widened its mandate to include the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. Much attention in recent years has been devoted to the negative social, political and economic impact of intra-state conflict on development. Africa has become the poster child of the contemporary discourse of the securitization of development. By the production of a stereotypical typology of conflict in Africa as barbaric, widespread and destructive, and by favouring internal causes for the prevalence of armed chaos, external stakeholders are able to legitimize a predominantly state-centric peacebuilding discourse and strategy of market liberalization and democratization.

The second chapter endeavours to define the terms 'small arms and light weapons' and 'weapons collection programs', and explains the effects of small arms proliferation. It describes the international context in which small arms proliferation became problematic and what supply side policy responses have developed, including arms control and forcible weapons collection programs. Chapter 3 analyses arms control and practical disarmament from the demand side, in particular in East Africa. It probes into the different reasons for wanting to possess and use a gun based on four levels of analysis: regional, state, community (inter and intra-tribal), and individual. Chapter 3 also seeks to discuss the underlying theory and practice of voluntary disarmament.

Chapter 4 begins the second part of the thesis on the case study of North-eastern Uganda. It introduces the people and environment of Karamoja and the history of British colonialism in the area between 1888-1961. The discussion elucidates sources of conflict between the pastoralist and central government that have persisted until the present day, including: a centralized notion of authority; a static conception of territory; a semi-nomadic lifestyle as an administrative problem; a development policy which favoured agriculture over pastoralism; and British conservation theory and control of land use which conflicted with pastoralist coping responses. The discussion also presents the interpretation by the British that disarmament was a law and order issue. Chapter 4 concludes that centralized control, both in theory and practice, was an enduring legacy of colonialism in relations between the Karamojong and the state.

The fifth chapter mainly analyses the post-colonial Period between 1961 up until 2003, and the nexus between pastoralism, small arms, and state attempts at disarmament. It discusses the pastoralists' demand for small arms, the increasing militarization of conflicts in the area, and the sources of those conflicts. These include: major social and cultural mutations in Karamojong society; severe degradation of the local environment coupled with a rising population; lifestyle clashes and the problems associated with neighbouring districts, and tension between the state and pastoralists due to a development policy focused on agriculture. Persistent recourse to disarmament by the various governments of the post-colonial era, as a means of managing the conflicts in Karamoja, is a reoccurring theme.

The final chapter builds on the previous two chapters to discuss the failed 2001-2002 weapons collection program in North-eastern Uganda. It questions whether the disarmament program was a supply or demand-oriented approach, examining the program from the point of view of its planning, including the conceptual links to contemporary thinking on practical disarmament in the voluntary phase, and the return to control and domination strategies during the implementation of the forceful phase of disarmament. In discussing the planning and implementation, Chapter 6 weighs the successes and failures of the 2001-2002 weapons collection program and attempts to understand why the program was conceived in such a fashion and what the failed

program means for relations between the state and pastoralist communities, and future attempts at disarmament and development in the area.

I demonstrate that the micro-disarmament program in Karamoja was flawed both in its conception and implementation. The thesis concludes that without integrating the demand factors for small arms and security concerns of stakeholders, it is questionable to what extent practical disarmament programs will have a positive effect on the long-term socio-economic development of the affected communities.

Part One

Small Arms, Light Weapons and Peacebuilding

Part One

Small Arms, Light Weapons and Peacebuilding

Chapter 1:

*The Merging of Security and Development
and the Understanding of Conflict in Africa*

Chapter 1: The Merging of Security and Development, and the Understanding of Conflict in Africa'

Introduction

Following the merger of development and security agendas in the post-cold war world, non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions and western governments, and academics have turned their attention to the new security threats emanating from under-development in the South. Much attention in recent years has been shed on the impact of conflict on development. Africa has become the poster child of this new discourse. This chapter seeks to explore the merging of the sub-fields of development studies and security studies after 1989, and what was the intellectual impact. It will attempt to explain the reasoning and circumstances of this intellectual convergence and the resulting influence on policymaking in the post-Cold War period. Secondly, this chapter will attempt to explore in greater depth how conflict is perceived amongst donors. What causes are believed to be responsible for the prevalence of conflict in Africa. What are the assumptions underlying their understanding of the social processes, how this is informed by their own ethical traditions and ideology, and what are other possible explanations for the pervasiveness of armed hostilities on the continent. The chapter aims to provide a hypothesis as to why conflict in Africa is necessarily described in such narrow terms, in order to justify activities that comprise the 'peacebuilding orthodoxy', such as weapons collection programs.

While development discourses have very readily adopted security concerns into their agenda, one would be reticent to say the same of those occupied by strategic studies. Although the term 'security' presently has many different meanings, in the context of

International Relations literature, traditionally it was associated with two assumptions: “one, that most threats to a state’s security arise from outside its borders and, two, that these threats are primarily, if not exclusively, military in nature and usually require a military response if the security of the target state is to be preserved”.¹ Contemporary challenges to this definition of security are based upon three areas: the referent object to be secured; the nature and origin of the threat; and the type of response engendered.

While it is not within the scope of this chapter to discuss in-depth the contending theories of International Relations, it is necessary to trace the intellectual roots of the concept of security. IR as an academic discipline is relatively new; the genesis of strategic studies, the sub-field concerned with the security of the state using a rational actor model is even more recent, although the study of strategy itself is as ancient as the classics such as Thucydides’ *The Peloponnesian War* or Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*. Given the origins of the sub-field of strategic studies in the post-World War II era, it is not surprising that the primary concerns of intellectuals at the time was focused on nuclear war and strategy. From the beginning, there was a very close link between academics and practitioners unlike other disciplines, and in many respects, the epistemological concerns of the realist orthodoxy coloured the worldview and priorities of the policymakers (and vice versa). Thus it was believed that “the state acts as a *container* of security, ensuring the security of the people within its borders. Security for individuals, in other words, is guaranteed by their citizenship of a particular state”.²

¹ Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World security predicament: state making, regional conflict, and the international system, Emerging global issues* (London: L. Rienner Publishers, 1995) pg5.

² David Mutimer, "Beyond Strategy: Critical Thinking and the New Security Studies," in *Contemporary security and strategy*, ed. Craig A. Snyder (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pg82.

Certainly this logic has been further complicated by the mass migration of people taking up residence in countries not their own.

This state-centric orthodoxy has been challenged and continues to be questioned by a variety of scholars.³ Some have criticized the *prima facie* logic of the state as the guarantor of security as “the way in which the most direct threats to individuals (can) come not from the anarchic world of international relations and the citizens of other states, but from the institutions of organized violence of their own state”.⁴ This precluded the traditional assumption that the state was the only institution capable of providing security by highlighting the problematic relationship between states, communities and individuals:

The security of individuals is locked into an unbreakable paradox in which it is partly dependent on, and partly threatened by, the state. Individuals can be threatened by their own state in a variety of ways, and they can also be threatened through their state as a result of its interactions with other states in the international system.⁵

Still others have questioned the desirability of the state as the referent object of security.

In 1991, Ken Booth wrote:

‘Security’ means the absence of threats. Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do...Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, *not power or order*, produces true security. Emancipation, theoretically, is security.⁶

³ For a good discussion of the trends consult: Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, "From Strategy to Security: Foundations of Critical Security Studies," in *Critical security studies: concepts and cases*, ed. Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (London: UCL Press, 1997).

⁴ Ibid., pg44. Also see: Ayoob, *The Third World security predicament: state making, regional conflict, and the international system*.

⁵ Barry Buzan, *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era*, 2nd ed. (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) pg364.

⁶ Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies*, 17, no. 4 (1991): pg319. Emphasis added.

Booth is by no means alone in concluding that "individuals are the ultimate referent".⁷ Others, such as Ole Waever, have concentrated on 'societal security'; the link between the individual, identity and his/her community. All of these scholars are part of a larger intellectual movement that began with Buzan's book *People, States and Fear*, which critiqued the epistemological and ontological assumptions of (neo)realism from *within* the field of strategic studies and reflected the theoretical debates occurring in International Relations in general.⁸

Criticism regarding the conservatism of the security agenda also developed concurrently *outside* the discipline. This was largely due to the perceived political opportunity generated by the end of the Cold War and centred on the nature and origins of threats. The United Nations, in particular, was active in attempting to redefine security and insecurity. Various agencies, such as UNESCO and the UNDP, have published a series of documents expanding their definition beyond the 'negative conception of security' envisioned by traditional security studies as the absence of threat to a more 'positive conception of security', including the provision of basic human needs and rights.⁹ The UNDP's Human Development Report of 1994 was particularly noticeable in crossing the development and security boundaries by partnering hitherto disparate topics together in chapters such as: Towards sustainable, human development; Capturing the

⁷ Critical Security Studies as a paradigm has spawned its own literature. See: R. G. Wyn Jones, *Security, strategy, and critical theory, Critical security studies* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

⁸ York Centre for International and Security Studies. Conference (7th: 1999: York University), J. Marshall Beier, and Samantha Arnold, *(Dis)placing security: critical re-evaluations of the boundaries of security studies: selected proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference of the York Centre for International and Security Studies* (Toronto: Centre for International and Security Studies York University, 2000).

⁹ Unesco., *Non-military aspects of international security, Peace and conflict issues* (Paris: Unesco, 1995). Unesco., "International Symposium 'From Partial Insecurity to Global Security'" (UNESCO Headquarters, 1996). Larry Seaquist, "The Venice Deliberations: transformations in the meaning of "security": practical steps toward a new security culture" (paper presented at the The Venice Deliberations: Conversations in the Library, Venice, Italy, 1994).

peace dividend; and New Dimensions of human security.¹⁰ It was also perhaps the first influential intellectual collaboration by academics of both fields of study.

Around this time in the mid-1990s, middle power states such as the Scandinavian countries and Canada, began to adopt human security formally into their rhetoric and policy. Then-Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy:

Canada began using the language of human security when it became obvious that in the aftermath of the Cold War a new foreign policy paradigm was needed...it was apparent that in the new era the primary victims of conflict, if not the primary targets, were most often civilians. Clearly, the protection of individuals would have to be a major focus of our foreign policy...In a similar vein, I believe that the concept of peace and security – national, regional, and global – makes sense only if it is derived from individual security.¹¹

Human security was truly a new paradigm in security studies in that it questioned the nature of the referent object to be secured, believed the nature of the threats were many and diverse, and the required response was humanitarianism and multilateralism.¹² Predictably it was given a lukewarm response by traditional pundits, or ignored all together.

Scholars who attempted to expand the intellectual space within security studies garnered the same critiques levelled against human security. Barry Buzan, in 1991, had correctly predicted the widening agenda; he stated:

The security of human collectivities is affected by factors in five major sectors: military, political, economic, societal and environmental. Generally speaking, military security concerns the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states, and states' perceptions of each other's intentions.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme., *Human development report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1994).

¹¹ Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security," (Ottawa: DFAIT, 2000), pg1.

¹² Human security is still a debated term however, it may be divided into three differing conceptions: Human rights/rule of law; Safety of people/humanitarian; and Sustainable human development. The first being the most narrow, to the last, which is the most wide reaching. For a more complete discussion, consult: Fen Osler Hampson and Jean Daudelin, *Madness in the multitude: human security and world disorder* (Oxford; Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Political security concerns the organizational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Economic security concerns access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Societal security concerns the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom. Environmental security concerns the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend. These five sectors do not operate in isolation from each other. Each defines a focal point within the security problematique, and a way of ordering priorities, but all are woven together in a strong web of linkages.¹³

Buzan paved the way for a flood of new and often very unorthodox ideas about the origin and nature of threats. Strategists complained about a lack of coherency and intellectual rigour in the new agenda. "The rising fashion of linking (them) risks creating a conceptual muddle rather than a paradigm or worldview shift – a *de-definition* rather than a *re-definition* of security. If we begin to speak about all the forces and events that threaten life, property and well-being (on a large scale) as threats to our national security, we shall soon drain them of any meaning".¹⁴ These two quotes demonstrate the state of the debate in strategic/security studies in the past few years. There is very little agreement about the 'who, what and how' questions. Critics of the (neo)realist orthodoxy point to an underlying 'why': why the (political) fixation on the state and strategy? By 'securitizing' a problem, Ole Waever hypothesizes, the state claims a special right firstly, by defining what is a problem, and secondly, by exercising particular authority in dealing with the problem.¹⁵ By narrowly defining threats in only military terms, this privileges military

¹³ Buzan, *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era* pg19-20.

¹⁴ Daniel Deudney, "The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security," *Millennium*, 19, no. 3 (1990): pg465.

¹⁵ O. Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in *On security, New directions in world politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

preparation as the best means of achieving security.¹⁶ Thus, (neo)realism provided a structural approach to understanding security.

Some authors have argued that such a limited neo-realist view of states (operating in an anarchic international environment) obfuscated other perpetual threats such as terrorism, intra-state wars, or underdevelopment, until the demise of the pre-occupation with state and alliance security. Caroline Kennedy-Pipe emphasizes that "limited wars, ethnic conflicts and low-level warfare have been perennial features of the twentieth-century international landscape, but (that) the Cold War distorted and narrowed our understanding of the nature of global politics; perceptions of war, conflict and peace became focused on nuclear war and strategy..."¹⁷

Thus scholars have only recently 'discovered' the links between poverty and violence or incidences of civil war to levels of economic development. Other authors, such as Simon Dalby, level a more overtly political critique:

During the Cold War critics of the Western use of the term *security* and of the practices of strategic studies pointed out that they were both used to maintain the dominance of American political priorities on the global scene...Indeed, it might be argued that the dilemma of academic security discourse after the Cold War is precisely that its conceptual infrastructure has long outlived any usefulness it might have once had and has mutated into a number of discourses that operate to maintain the unjust political order of developed and underdeveloped and over-consumption in the developed world at the expense of the degradation of the global environment.¹⁸

These critiques are reminiscent of the debate within human security circles. Some scholars derided the strategic and military-centred conceptions of threats, while other writers cast their intellectual net much farther. They condemned the inequitable global economic and political system as primary factors of instability.

¹⁶ Mutimer, "Beyond Strategy: Critical Thinking and the New Security Studies," pg86.

¹⁷ Clive Jones and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *International security in a global age: securing the twenty-first century* (London: Frank Cass, 2000) pg9.

¹⁸ Simon Dalby, "Contesting an Essential Concept: Reading the Dilemmas in Contemporary Security Discourse," in *Critical security studies: concepts and cases*, ed. Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (London: UCL Press, 1997), pg4-5.

The self-interested realisation of the internationalisation of the effects of instability has led to an explicit validation of the first argument by governments of the Western world and an unofficially tacit acknowledgement of the latter by others. A Swedish government report recently stated:

...threats to our own security today are assumed to be associated, inter alia, with global population trends, combined with slow economic development and social justice...The 'new' conflicts are about identities and the status, culture and values of various groups. They are enacted in the social sphere rather than in the arenas familiar to traditional security policy. As a complement to the concepts that are the common currency of traditional power politics ('high politics'), such as security guarantees and arms control, we must now introduce concepts appropriate to the community level ('low politics').¹⁹

In 1998, the then British Secretary of State for International Development, the Rt Hon Clare Short, declared in a speech to the Royal College of Defence Studies:

As the world becomes smaller, and borders become more porous, our interest in the stability of other regions is increased. While armed conflicts clearly impose huge costs on people living within the countries concerned...They have consequences for countries further afield. This can include regional destabilization; the loss of markets and investment; the need to accommodate large numbers of refugees; the requirement to provide emergency humanitarian assistance; and the demand to contribute troops to multinational peace support operations. They can also lead to serious damage to the regional and global environment.²⁰

Pared down somewhat, DFID's argument for "why we should embrace the objective of international development. First, because it is right to do so...Second, because we have a common interest in doing so."²¹ In consequence, *our* security has become linked with *their* underdevelopment. This new rhetorical reasoning may be added to a long list of motives for overseas development assistance (ODA), including "idealism, generosity, and

¹⁹ Mark Duffield, *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2001) pg36.

²⁰ Rt Hon Clare Short, 13 May 1998.

²¹ Duffield, *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security* pg37. DFID 1997:16

international solidarity...but often...political expediency, ideological confrontation and commercial self-interest".²²

Development aid as a relatively new post-war phenomenon, like security studies, also experienced some growing pains. The late-1980s, early 1990s marked the beginning of a heated debate within development circles as to the fundamental justification of ODA. It was mainly instigated by the changing global political and economic environment. This was not a temporary disagreement regarding the aid priority of the moment, such as 'Basic Human Needs' or 'Women In Development', but more seriously, policymakers and practitioners were having an identity crisis concerning the nature and purpose of international assistance. Donors and recipients were fatigued, having grown disillusioned with the dismal results of decades of failed programming. Aspirational slogans included 'Do No Harm'. With the end of the Cold War, the ideological and security motives for aid had lost the immediacy of their resonance and old enemies were quickly being transformed into new beneficiaries.

Lesser-developed countries (LDCs) in Africa, competed for a shrinking share of the overseas development assistance pie as aid commitments were affected by donor budget deficits. Previously, assistance to Africa outstripped any other region in aid to GNP ratios. However by the late 1980s, the continent's share of all official aid had peaked at 30%.²³ After the fall of the Berlin Wall, from 1990-96, ODA to sub-Saharan Africa contracted by 21%, with even larger average annual cutbacks in recent years.²⁴ Noticeably, larger shares of international assistance for the 'Dark Continent' were being

²² United Nations Development Programme., *Human development report 1994* pg69.

²³ Roger C Riddell, "The end of foreign aid to Africa? Concerns about donor policies," *African Affairs*, 98, no. 392 (1999): pg312.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: pg313.

funnelled to emergency activities and less towards development programs. This augured poorly for aid appeal in a progressively more restraint donor environment, which focused its policies increasingly on economic growth and the achievement of set targets, to the detriment of recipients' needs. ODA to Africa and development aid in general needed a new *raison d'être*.

As activities surrounding conflict-related emergencies became more frequent, the absolute and relative terms of relief budgets (to ODA) rose considerably from the mid-1980s onwards.²⁵ Labelled the 'rising cost of conflict', this expenditure did not pass unnoticed; relief aid was critiqued as the predominant response to conflict. Implicit in this opprobrium was a criticism of the existing relationship between foreign and security policy to international development assistance. Academics pointed to the importance of situating ODA and more specifically, development aid, within a more comprehensive strategy, as one of several available policy tools. Later, researchers such as Mark Duffield, David Keen and Alex de Waal hypothesized that "the provision of relief resources may influence significantly the dynamics of conflict".²⁶ They pointed to the manipulation of relief supplies by parties to a conflict in several case studies, which had detrimental effects on the civilian population. Building on the relief-rehabilitation-development continuum (a model since contested), other academics wondered if a reverse phenomenon might be possible, namely that development aid could have a positive influence on the outcome of violent conflict. In a changed geo-political environment, they emphasized the untapped potential for development programs "to prevent, mitigate or

²⁵ Joanna Macrae and Overseas Development Institute, *Aiding recovery? the crisis of aid in chronic political emergencies* (London; New York: Zed Books in association with Overseas Development Institute, 2001) pg26.

²⁶ Ibid.

resolve violent conflict".²⁷ This view has gained significant currency amongst NGOs and donors.²⁸

This new peacebuilding orthodoxy regarding the role of ODA in responding to conflict has allowed aid actors to respond to their critics. By increasing claims as to its social and political function, ODA has reclaimed its political and strategic relevancy. It has also spawned new jargon and programming priorities, such as 'conflict management', 'peacebuilding' and 'post-conflict reconstruction'.²⁹ These ideas were mainstreamed through a series of important documents including: *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992; *An Agenda for Development* in 1994; the *Human Development Report 1994*; the *European Union Structural Stability communiqué*; and the *OECD-DAC Guidelines of 1997*.³⁰ Conflict was newly highlighted as *the* impediment to development. "Tellingly, research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has shown that of the 34 countries furthest from achieving international development goals, 22 are affected by current or recent conflict."³¹ Curiously, development was and is also viewed as the panacea to conflict and insecurity:

²⁷ Jonathan Goodhand, *A synthesis report: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Nepal and Sri Lanka*, vol. 1, *Conflict Assessments* (London: The Conflict, Security and Development Group. Centre for Defence Studies, 2001) pg12.

²⁸ Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence Department of International Development, United Kingdom, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," (2001), Liu Institute for Global Issues. Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict, International development* (Paris: OECD, 2001), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: strategies for sustainable development, International development* (Paris: OECD, 2001), "Proceedings from the 691st Wilton Park Conference Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Lessons Learnt and Best Practice" (Wilton Park, UK, 30 September- 4 October 2002).

²⁹ Further discussion later in this chapter.

³⁰ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

³¹ Paul Cornish, "Terrorism, Insecurity and Underdevelopment," *The Conflict, Security and Development Group Bulletin*, no. 13 (2001): pg2.

Today, even remote conflicts can pose security and developmental concerns far beyond a State's borders. This new recognition gives international peace and security a wider meaning, calls for measures that can further development even during conflict, and indicates that development, when successfully pursued, is another way to define peace.³²

Aid actors, including NGOs, bilateral donors and international financial institutions (IFIs), cognizant of the cost of conflict to the developmental process, adapted the conflict analysis discourse in order to improve the performance of aid to achieve the desired results of liberalization and 'structural stability'. Lesser Developed Countries, modelled after the Western conception of modernity and the state, in essence were to aspire to "a situation involving sustainable economic development, democracy and respect for human rights, viable political structures, healthy social and economic conditions, with the capacity to manage change without resorting to violent conflict".³³ I argue this 'new humanitarianism' or radicalization of the politics of development, as Duffield calls it, justified interventionism and the transformation of societies. Thus in the post-cold war era, the nature and purpose of aid had changed with the adoption of the conflict lens and the language of security. Security as defined by the DAC is:

...an all-encompassing condition in which people and communities live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being. Underpinning this broader understanding is a recognition that the security of people and the security of states are mutually reinforcing. *It follows that a wide range of state institution and other entities may be responsible for ensuring some aspect of security.*³⁴

³² Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Development: Report of the Secretary-General," (United Nations, 1994), pg7.

³³ Goodhand, *A synthesis report: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Nepal and Sri Lanka* pg99.

³⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict* pg38.

One cannot imagine that such definitions of security, largely by development actors, would have been permitted during the Cold War period. However, changing political and strategic conditions have been permissive of an encroachment by civil society and aid agencies into habitual domains of the state, such as security sector reform (SSR), weapons transfers and disarmament. Programming by ODA actors in areas traditionally monopolized by the military and foreign policy pundits has largely been due to “a convergence of conventional development and anti-poverty actions with peace-building and reconstruction efforts”.³⁵ The new political reality of complex humanitarian emergencies, such as Somalia and Afghanistan, have forced a rapprochement between the military and humanitarian agencies as they are jointly involved in the process of implementing peace agreements and rehabilitation.

Donor Discourses on Conflict in Africa

What is most striking about the literature on conflict in Africa is the production of a particular image of what characterizes conflict in the continent. Packaged under the general rubric ‘conflict’, much of the literature speaks of situations of civil war in which the armed hostilities have caused more than one thousand deaths per year.³⁶ Violent social conflict in Africa, like other regions of the world, is prevalent and due to a variety of circumstances and motives. It manifests itself in many forms, from culturally accepted practices such as women and cattle raiding to disruptions of modern political life such as election intimidation. Despite the fact that these types of violent conflicts do not surpass the one thousand deaths threshold, they remain significant indicators of the tensions and

³⁵ Ibid. pg37.

³⁶ This is a standard empirical definition, which is not usually cited. See studies such as: J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *Correlates of War Project: International and Civil War Data, 1816-1992* (Ann Arbor, Mich.:ICPSR, 1994)

challenges facing African communities. However conflict in Africa is repeatedly described in varying degrees as 'intra-state' perpetrated by criminal gangs and rebels, 'targeting civilians', 'using child soldiers', and 'causing massive human rights atrocities'.³⁷ These features of warfare in Africa run contrary to Western Christian notions of the just war doctrine.

While there is no rule in international law against civil wars, defined as "a war between two or more groups of inhabitants of the same states, one of which may be the government",³⁸ the actors and motives of African conflicts contradict *jus ad bellum* (the justice of a war) on several accounts. The decision to go to war should only be made by a legitimate authority, "...subjects of a sovereign power were stripped of the right of war".³⁹ Moreover, the rightful purpose of war is defensive in nature, to resist aggression but not to change an aggressor's type of government or to address economic or social issues of justice. Indeed one influential study by the World Bank opined "Popular perceptions see rebellion as a protest motivated by genuine and extreme grievance. Rebels are public-spirited heroes fighting against injustice. Economic analysis sees rebellion as more like a form of organized crime".⁴⁰ The study on the economic causes of

³⁷ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General," (United Nations, 1998), Department of International Development, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document.", Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security.", Robert D Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet," *The Atlantic Monthly*, (1994).

³⁸ Peter Malanczuk, *Akehurst's Modern Introduction to International Law*, 7th ed. (London: Routledge, 1997) pg318.

³⁹ Terry Nardin and David R. Mapel, eds., *Traditions of International Ethics*, vol. 17, *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992) pg30.

⁴⁰ Paul Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy," (World Bank, 2000), pg2.

civil conflict concluded that “rebellion is unrelated to objective circumstances of grievance while being caused by the feasibility of predation”.⁴¹

Furthermore, according to the just war doctrine, the intra-state conflicts grossly violate *jus in bello* (justice in war) norms on many accounts, principally non-combatant immunity. Fighting ought to be restricted to soldiers and military targets to protect innocent civilians and prevent ‘unnecessary suffering’.⁴² These principles of international humanitarian law are embodied in international customary law and political philosophy.

Clausewitz wrote that:

...the laws of war were almost imperceptible and hardly worth mentioning...(as) they accorded so perfectly with the limits of military necessity...if we find civilized nations do not put their prisoners to death, do not devastate town and countries, this is because their intelligence has taught them more effectual means of applying force than these rude acts of mere instinct.⁴³

The 1948 Genocide Convention,⁴⁴ the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the supplemental protocols of 1977 codified international humanitarian law. They represented ‘progress’ and defined what was inhumane and unacceptable behaviour during wartime. In regards to civilians, grave breaches of the Geneva Convention include:

...willful killing; torture and inhuman treatment; wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health; extensive destruction or appropriation of property not justified by military necessity; compelling a civilian to serve in the forces of a hostile power; wilfully depriving a civilian of the rights of a fair and regular trial; unlawful deprivation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a civilian; and the taking of civilians as hostages.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ibid., pg4.

⁴² Suffering which would produce no military advantage. Malanczuk, *Akehurst's Modern Introduction to International Law* pg343.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Genocide is defined as the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Ibid. pg357.

⁴⁵ Ibid. pg356.

By focusing, in images and in discourse, on the human tragedy, donor literature seems to suggest that there are quantitative and qualitative differences between conflict in Africa and other regions of the world. Accordingly, there is a 'new' and urgent aspect to conflict in Africa. It is more widespread, more murderous, and more destructive than anywhere else:

Since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa, the vast majority of them intra-state in origin. In 1996 alone, 14 of the 53 countries of Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for more than half of all war-related deaths worldwide and resulting in more than 8 million refugees, returnees and displaced persons.⁴⁶

Sub-Saharan Africa has thus won the unenviable distinction of 'the most conflict affected region in the world'.⁴⁷ While the statistics are damning, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that violent conflict is ubiquitous everywhere on the continent.

While the international community rightfully re-criminates the terrible crimes against humanity perpetrated in various African wars, it is difficult and unhelpful to judge if the conflicts on the continent are qualitatively worse than in other regions. And yet the implicit suggestion in the literature seems to be that conflict in Africa is barbaric and unique:

The most disturbing aspect of conflict in Africa is the increasing use of extreme violence, especially over the last ten years... Mutilation, torture of women and children, violent rituals, and the forcible involvement of relatives, children and spouses in killing and rape are used as a means of waging war primarily by militia groups and by some state proxies... There is a danger that extreme violence of this kind will erode the social fabric of African societies and further hasten state collapse.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Boutros-Ghali, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General," pg2.

⁴⁷ Department of International Development, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," pg9.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pg10.

Such representations invoke ideas of pre-modern societies without cultural norms, incapable of development. It produces a stereotypical construct of a typology of conflict in Africa, which elicits an emotive response amongst the public and justifies intervention by Western 'experts' and aid programmes. For surely, such savagery and lawlessness requires Western values to civilize and to regulate African society into a more just and humane community! While it is difficult to distinguish between the altruistic and the condescending; one may confidently note that conflict in Africa has spawned a veritable plethora of non-governmental, governmental, local, national and international actors; an industry worth billions of dollars. The Secretary-General to the United Nations, in his Report on Africa, noted "the multiplicity of humanitarian actors and mandates operating in any given crisis is one of the striking characteristics of modern conflicts".⁴⁹ He further remarked that "after more than 40 years of technical assistance programmes, 90 percent of the \$12 billion a year spent on technical assistance is still spent on foreign expertise – despite the fact that national experts are now available in many fields".⁵⁰ What has motivated the many actors working on conflict in Africa?

One South African author, Laurie Nathan, has argued, "violence may be a central concern from a humanitarian perspective, but that for analytical and strategic purposes, it should be regarded as a *symptom* of intra-state crises".⁵¹ In other words, academics and practitioners have reacted to the violent manifestations of the structural problems in which Africa faces. This has led to a focus on "the proximate causes of hostilities and

⁴⁹ Boutros-Ghali, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General," pg18.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pg26.

⁵¹ Laurie Nathan, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: The Structural Cause of Violence in Africa," *Track Two*, 10, no. 2 (2001): pg1.

relegating structural issues to the status of 'background conditions'.⁵² This critique seems pertinent when examining the aid policy priorities of the Canadian government, a leading proponent of human security and development in Africa. Stated priorities include: war affected children; internally displaced persons; landmines; and the illicit traffic in small arms.⁵³ These issues tend to be media friendly, popular with the public, and morally uncomplicated. They also favour political interventions of short duration. Having signed a convention or convoked an international conference, donor governments can claim to have acted purposefully and achieved a visible outcome. The focus on crisis reaction and post-conflict reconstruction rather than long-term prevention is likely linked to aid actors' selective choice of the causes of conflict.

Rather than embracing a holistic view of conflict, which would acknowledge historical antecedents, geo-political realities and the interests of actors, donor literature overwhelmingly favours internal causes as the reason for the high prevalence of armed hostilities in Africa. As a caveat, I acknowledge that the various donor countries and international financial institutions (IFIs) do not speak with a single voice. In order not to over-generalize and to distinguish between the various discourses, I will examine documents from the World Bank Development Research Group (DRG), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada. These four actors together are a good representation of present Western thinking on conflict in Africa.

⁵² Ibid.: pg4.

⁵³ David Kilgour, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) Canada, (paper presented at the University of Alberta conference on Prospects for an African Renaissance: Culture, Development and Reconciliation, Edmonton, Canada, February 25 2000). Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security."

At the extreme of the spectrum, conspicuously informed by capitalist ideology, is the World Bank Development Research Group, led by Paul Collier. The DRG has been prolifically producing econometric and statistical research for their project on the 'Economics of Civil War, Crime and Violence' since its inception in 1999.⁵⁴ Collier and his fellow researcher Anke Hoeffler, famously produced a study on the motives of greed or grievance in civil wars. Using a data set of war in all regions during the period 1965-1999, they concluded that:

When the main grievances – inequality, political repression, and ethnic and religious divisions – are measured objectively, they provide no explanatory power in predicting rebellion...By contrast, economic characteristics – dependence on primary commodity exports, low average incomes, slow growth, and large diasporas – are all significant and powerful predictors of civil war...Rebellions either have the objective of natural resource predation, or are critically dependent upon natural resource predation in order to pursue other objectives.⁵⁵

Risk of armed conflict was also found to increase with population dispersion and mountainous terrain. Generally, the ability of insurgents to finance rebellion (greed) was the main indicator of a propensity towards violent upheaval. Of particular interest was their finding that greater ethnic and religious divisions (but not polarity), reduced the likelihood of civil war. This factor, and the emphasis on scientific rigour and objectivity was probably largely aimed at another influential study by Ted Robert Gurr, of the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management. His report *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflict* is

⁵⁴ See Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy.", Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and World Bank. Development Research Group., *Greed and grievance in civil war? Policy research working paper; 2355* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000), Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "Why Are There So Many Civil Wars in Africa? Understanding and Preventing Violent Conflict," *Journal of African Economies*, (2000), Havard Hegre, Ranveig Gissinger, and Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Globalization and Internal Conflict," in *Globalization and Conflict*, ed. Gerald Schneider, Katherine Barbieri, and Nils Petter Gleditsch (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

⁵⁵ Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy," pg21.

based on social and political explanations of conflict and favours ethnic grievances as the primary motive.⁵⁶

The DRG has produced other policy relevant reports with similar findings.⁵⁷ One report on *Globalization and Internal Conflict* conceded that while there was some evidence that trade increases income inequality, there was no discernable link between inequality and civil war.⁵⁸ They reasoned:

...the beneficial effect of trade and foreign investment outweighs whatever violence may be generated by increased inequality...Hence, since we find economic openness to increase average income and political stability, we do find an indirect conflict *reducing* effect of globalization. Our tentative judgement would be that great parts of Africa and some other areas marred by poverty, poor governance, and conflict are victims of too little globalization rather than too much.⁵⁹

Another report exploring the specificity of conflict in Africa concluded more constructively "the strategy to prevent civil wars in Africa should be based on promoting political freedom and moulding a governance framework that can accommodate Africa's social diversity".⁶⁰

We suggest that the "appropriateness" of democratic institutions required for promoting inter-group cooperation in Africa depends on the degree to which these institutions embody the principles of participation, inclusion and consensus-building among ethnically-defined social groups.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ted Robert Gurr, "Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts," (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ The reports all seem to use similar data sets and thus are vulnerable to the same methodological critiques. The researchers assume the reliability of their raw data (e.g. rates of scholarization, GDP) in a region where exact representative figures may be difficult to produce. The researchers also assume that social processes can be simplified and accurately represented by quantitative measures (e.g. Polity Index of democracy). It is claimed that the above quantitative methods produce results, which are more objective and reliable than other methods of social inquiry.

⁵⁸ Hegre, Gissinger, and Gleditsch, "Globalization and Internal Conflict," pg21.

⁵⁹ Italics added. Ibid.

⁶⁰ Elbadawi and Sambanis, "Why Are There So Many Civil Wars in Africa? Understanding and Preventing Violent Conflict," pg16.

⁶¹ Ibid.: pg18.

Academic studies such as these carry great weight with donors. The World Bank DRG has one of the largest research budgets for policy relevant research on conflict. Their reports are distributed and cited widely. The findings are problematic in that they concentrate the blame of violent conflict on internal factors such as poor governance, or greedy rebels without any consideration for historical or economic circumstances. It is as if the conflicts occurred in a geo-political vacuum, untouched by the structural legacies of colonialism, the strategic interference by Cold War superpowers, or the economic and financial shocks produced by World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). In other words, according to DRG research, external actors have had little or no responsibility for present conditions in Africa. Furthermore, the international community possesses the solutions: liberalization and democratization.

While the DAC of the OECD agrees in principle with the World Bank aims of liberalization and democratization, the rhetoric of the consortium of developed states is more conciliatory.⁶² The DAC recognizes that imbalanced economic growth and (perceived) disparities in the distribution of the benefits of development can also increase tension amongst social groups and between regions, especially if the society lacks institutions to respond to these inequalities.⁶³ Thus the “interdependent challenges of security, economic stabilisation and development must be analysed collectively, and activities designed to respond to all three”.⁶⁴ Although the DAC is more sensitive to

⁶² The members of the Development Assistance Committee are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Commission of the European Communities.

⁶³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict* pg88.

⁶⁴ Ibid. pg34.

social and economic justice issues, these considerations are limited to the situations within developing countries.

According to the OECD, the main factors for conflict remain internal, whether they be structural conditions, such as “interrelated political, social and economic factors...population density, the level and distribution of wealth and opportunity, the state of the resource base, the structure and ethnic make-up of society, and the history of inter-group relations” or accelerating or triggering factors which result in the escalation of disputes in to violent hostilities.⁶⁵ These might include:

economic decline; changes in the degree of internal state cohesion; shifts in internal control of the central authority, including the military; changes in the internal distribution of power, including access to government power and privilege; shipment of (small) arms; intervention of neighbouring states, regional powers and organisations; and large movements of people and capital.⁶⁶

Again, one is struck by the focus on the domestic dynamics, such as power shifts or governance issues. Even mention of intervention is limited to those in geographic proximity to the conflicts, as though the transfer of military goods and capital have never come from further a field. The burden of colonial division and inequalities, the material and political support stemming from cold war rivalries are never mentioned in the DAC document.

The British government document on *The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa* is somewhat more comprehensive in its choice of relevant factors. It provides a historical background including de-colonialisation, the cold war and post-1989. The list of causation is a jumbled list covering much of the academic thinking on conflict in

⁶⁵ Ibid. pg87.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Africa.⁶⁷ Under root causes it includes: weak states and state collapse; economic decline and economic shock; historical factors; and natural resource wealth.⁶⁸ In each category, interesting statements are made but often not developed in the corresponding “Comprehensive Framework for Conflict Prevention in Africa” which appears later in the document.

The document begins by painting a scene of slow collapse of state institutions due to “governments (which) begin to operate through coercion, corruption and the cult of the ‘strong’ leader to secure political power and control of economic resources”.⁶⁹ The state is unable to provide basic social services and the security sector becomes unaccountable and abusive. A violent contest for power between different groups and factions, which may identify themselves ethnically often occurs simultaneously. Until this point, the factors raised are not surprising or innovative. However, the document goes on to say:

The process of holding elections can easily become a vehicle not for democratization but for the consolidation of personal and abusive rule...The ability of external actors to deal with such situations is further hampered by the dependence of the international political system on the concept of state sovereignty from which ‘shell states’ derive juridical status and hence a veneer of legitimacy.⁷⁰

Hence, there is the admission that democracy is not always the panacea, but may involve implementation difficulties. Furthermore, there is a very important acknowledgement that

⁶⁷ See for example, Collier, Hoeffler, and World Bank. Development Research Group., *Greed and grievance in civil war?*, William Zartman, Robert Jackson. Boutros-Ghali, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General.", Collier, Hoeffler, and World Bank. Development Research Group., *Greed and grievance in civil war*, Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy.", Guy Lamb, "A Literature Review on the Current Relationship Between War and Economic Agendas in Africa," (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2000), Roland Marchal and Christine Messiant, *Les chemins de la guerre et de la paix: Fins de conflit en Afrique orientale et australe* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997), William Reno, *Warlord politics and African states* (Boulder, CO: Lynner Rienner Publishers, 1998), William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁶⁸ Department of International Development, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," pg14-15.

⁶⁹Ibid., pg14.

⁷⁰Ibid.

external actors usually maintain the “fiction of statehood” and thus the sovereignty of Africa states, in order not to disrupt the status quo rules of international relations. It is unclear from the document whether the British government implies that sovereignty of such ‘shell states’ should no longer be respected, or whether international recognition should not be granted to governments that flirt with undemocratic practices.

The second stated root factor of conflict comprises economic decline and economic shock. The UK government document concedes “...Africa’s economic woes are also a consequence of massive debt, unfavourable terms of trading with the rest of the world and exclusion from an increasingly complex, technology-based and ‘globalised’ economy”. These are important impediments to economic development and elements of a more holistic picture of the causes of conflict in Africa. Unfortunately, the policy framework does not further address these structural inequalities. However, the Secretary General’s Report on Africa does provide additional insight by first, highlighting the long-term distortions in the political economy instituted by colonialism. This included physical infrastructure that was designed to serve the interests of trade with the metropolitan country, unfavourable terms of trade, economic activities strongly based upon the extraction of primary resources for export (which resulted in little demand or need for development of a skilled or educated workforce), and a “prevailing structure of incentives (which) favoured capturing the institutional remnants of the colonial economy for factional advantage”.⁷¹ Secondly, the report points to the cold war legacy of bilateral and multilateral loans which burden Africa states even today. “In many cases bilateral loans provided the funds for extensive military expenditures by African countries” in areas of

⁷¹ Boutros-Ghali, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General," pg4.

interest to the superpowers.⁷² He notes “Across Africa, Governments were sometimes pressured into accepting a wide range of loans which they did not need and could not productively utilize”.⁷³ Public sector debt has returned time and time again to haunt African states unable to meet basic expectations and critical needs in times of rising social tension and conflict.⁷⁴ The “unsustainable burden of debt” is addressed partly by recent initiatives such as debt forgiveness, but the economic shock therapy necessary to meet the conditionality of IFI aid is a continuing concern as an aggravating factor of conflict in Africa.⁷⁵

The third root cause for the British government echoes much of Collier hypothesis of natural resources wealth being more of a bane than a boon, with the caveat that the role of the private sector is critical to the belligerents’ “capacity to exploit and commercialize the resources”.⁷⁶ This is one area where the UK government clearly articulates action that can be taken to address a stated concern. It suggests international investment standards for conflict areas and business partnerships to enhance economic diversification, besides improved international controls to prevent illegal exploitation of resources.⁷⁷ Such measures have been recently agreed upon for ‘conflict diamonds’, but it remains to be seen, whether political commitment will endure when more strategically necessary resources such as petroleum are considered.

Amongst the secondary causes cited in the British government’s framework document, *The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa*, are other often-cited internal

⁷² Ibid., pg27.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pg26.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pg22.

⁷⁶ Department of International Development, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," pg15.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pg22.

factors. These include: unemployment, lack of education and population pressure; the abuse of ethnicity; the availability of arms;⁷⁸ and the absence of an independent, well-informed civil society sector. The tertiary factors are curiously more directly related to conflict resolution than causation. These are listed as: regional and interlocking conflict; failure to consolidate peace; lack of guarantors; inadequate and inappropriate mediation; and misplaced humanitarian and development assistance. As pertains to international actors, the last factor of the causes of conflict in Africa is a controversial topic amongst donors presently. This document suggests that:

There are increasing dangers that much-needed humanitarian assistance can cause wars to be intensified or prolonged...Misplaced development assistance can also heighten tension between groups and increase the risks of conflict.

While the UK government goes no further in developing this argument the DAC has given considerable thought to this dilemma. In their guidelines they note “Aid is often assumed to be a powerful lever for peace-building and reconciliation, but it can also be counter-productive, aggravating the competition between the parties in dispute, and raising the stakes in the struggles for political control”.⁷⁹ Relief aid, unaccompanied by long-term planning and local capacity building, can have further deleterious effects by undermining and weakening local administration.⁸⁰

Reviewing the World Bank Development Research Group studies, the Development Assistance Committee Guidelines *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*, and the British government’s framework document on *The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa*, one is struck by the conclusion that armed hostilities on the continent are mainly

⁷⁸ This aspect will be developed in greater depth in a later chapter.

⁷⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines: helping prevent violent conflict* pg105.

⁸⁰ Ibid. pg107.

due to internal causes. Whether these causes be: political (poor governance, lack of democracy), social (ethnic polarization, kinship organization) or economic (mismanagement, over reliance on the export of primary resources), there is an overwhelming tendency to paint only a partial picture conveniently omitting more challenging and troublesome aspects of international involvement. While I have tried to highlight elements of these, where presented in the above documents, I find that the reports give insufficient thought to external causes and triggers such as: the legacies of colonialism; economic and financial shocks induced by heavy debt burdens and structural adjustment programs; past and present military and political aid favouring certain actors, exacerbating political tensions; misplaced development assistance and humanitarian aid; and most of all, wide national and international disparities of income and wealth.

Where there is mention of any external factors, it is likely to be in the context of past guilt, such as the cold war or colonialization. At present, there is still inadequate honest discussion about critical factors like the sale of surplus Western weapons to Africa states and sub-state actors, or the role of multinational corporations in exacerbating conflict (e.g. Shell in Nigeria or Talisman in Sudan). In part, one is almost led to believe that the discourses on conflict in Africa are intentionally incomplete, as if the guidelines were written with the 'solutions' in mind *imprimis* and the conflicts were constructed in ways, which fit the resulting policy suggestions. Generally, the policy recommendations are the same, despite the varying circumstances, motivations and nature of the conflicts; good governance, economic development and integration into the global market are the panacea. Throughout this discussion, I have attempted to contrast the discourses with the Secretary-General's Report on *The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace*

and sustainable development in Africa, to demonstrate that a more holistic view of conflict is possible. This is a hugely influential policy document that managed to be constructively critical while reconciling the concerns of both donors and African states.⁸¹

The third major theme in donor discourse is a strong proclivity to view conflict as a negative social force in African society. Certainly with the highly publicized examples of civil war in Sierra Leone or the Great Lakes region, it would be easy to think of convincing arguments why conflict in Africa is destructive and undesirable. No compassionate person could argue against the impact these civil wars have had on its victims, however I would like to suggest that the donor view of conflict is not unproblematic and that this could lead to alternative readings of the value of conflict in African society.

While there is a strong tendency to assume that the donor literature on conflict in Africa is objective and authoritative, based on empirical study and comprehensive academic research on the topic, it should be noted that Western understanding of the desirability of conflict is much informed by our ethical traditions. As discussed above, the right of the state to war has always been acknowledged, however, in examining donor literature the armed hostilities are portrayed not as war perpetrated by the state, but as murderous and unlawful chaos. Over time, progressive thinking has taught us to prefer order above disorder, democracy above authoritarianism. "As with psychological conflict theory, most sociological examinations of conflict see it as an aberration that should and must be reduced, transformed or eliminated. Conflict is seen as situational rather than

⁸¹ Unsurprisingly, the report comes to the same conclusion that good governance, economic development and integration into the global market are desirable outcomes in order to prevent conflict.

instrumental, as pathological rather than normal”.⁸² In the context of the documents under examination, the repetitive use of dichotomies such as peace/conflict, civilian/combatant, allows no moral ambiguity about the desirability of conflict. We understand immediately from the images and phrases chosen that conflict is unequivocally bad for African societies.

However, these stark differentiations might be problematic in an African context. Philip White demonstrates how complicated violent conflict in African can be. He produced a table identifying different types of conflict, distinguished by state involvement or non-involvement.

Inter-state	War Border clashes Mutual aid to rebels
National (government involved)	Rebel challenge to state power Region in conflict with centre Warlordism
Inter-community	Government Partisan Government neutral, mediating Government uninvolved

While the exact typologies are not of importance, what is useful about White’s table is the variety of kinds of armed hostilities.⁸³ It illustrates that the protagonists and antagonists can be both civilian and conventional forces. Herein lies the problem with current literature about violent conflict in Africa. On the ground, there is little to distinguish between militia groups, irregular forces and civilians. The lines between combatant and non-combatant are not drawn nor respected, in the Western understanding

⁸²Adda B. Bozeman, *Conflict in Africa: concepts and realities* (Princeton; Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1976) pg220.

⁸³ Table reproduced from Philip White, "Responses to Conflict in the Horn of Africa" (paper presented at the Leeds University Centre for African Studies Conference 'Peasants, Liberation and Socialism in Africa', Leeds University, UK, 3-4 May 2002), pg4.

of non-combatant immunity. The British government claims "since 1960, over eight million people have died either directly or indirectly as a result of war in Africa, of whom five and a half million were civilians".⁸⁴ However much of the armed hostilities that concerns communities cannot be classified as civil war, as they result in far fewer than one thousand deaths per year. Nonetheless deadly, these clashes might be part of a traditional cultural activity aggravated by the technology of modern firepower:

Conflict involving pastoralist communities is likely to spill over frontier lines when help is sought from kinsmen across the border. Raiding for animals, a widespread practice in the pastoralist zone, often takes place across borders. Commercialization and access to automatic weapons have greatly raised the stakes of this practice, occasionally resulting in what might be termed international incidents.⁸⁵

How are we to understand these low level, often latent conflicts in African societies? Sociologist Adda Bozeman, in a regional comparison of how conflict is perceived across communities in Africa, suggested that social disharmony, even violence, may be appreciated as a function of order, where the conflict is controlled. Thus it does not carry the same negative moral, legal and political connotations as in the Occident:

Accepted as the crucible of the causal system, it (conflict) is also the arbiter of communal relations; institutionalized in patterns of behaviour and organization, it is, in fact, a positive focal value and the major structuring principle in African societies. In contrast to inclinations long prevalent in the West, in terms of which it is deemed morally, intellectually, and politically desirable to resolve conflict in order to achieve states of harmony and unity on the various planes of human existence, there is no compelling impulse in African culture to do away with conflict or deny its operations. The requirement is rather, to maintain the dynamic interplay between rival forces, while insisting that all of its incidents occur in a closed, familiar circuit, along strictly predictable lines.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Department of International Development, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," pg10.

⁸⁵ White, "Responses to Conflict in the Horn of Africa", pg4.

⁸⁶ Bozeman, *Conflict in Africa: concepts and realities* pg214.

Bozeman may be accused of condoning cultural relativity for a norm as universal as peace/war. However, I believe her point is that where adhering to social norms and cultural beliefs governing conflict, there might be a higher tolerance for violence if it is believed to be a part of (re)ordering society. In other words, “peace, as this condition is understood in the West, is not a prerequisite for the maintenance of the inner public order; conflict is allowed to express itself in violence”. Of course it is difficult to discern what levels of violence would be acceptable and under what conditions in which African communities.

Bozeman believed that for the administration of society, “internal war...as well as other forms of violence and conflict, are more likely to sustain than to disrupt existing schemes of government”.⁸⁷ Although she concedes that in terms of political society, “they contributed greatly to the instability and indeterminacy of Africa’s political entities, even as they provided the major impetus for the joining of ethnically and spatially separate communities”.⁸⁸ Bozeman’s final caveat provides food for thought. Given the colonial legacy of state borders that do not correspond to the frontiers of ethnic populations, and the Organization of African States’ (OAU) decision to hold territorial boundaries sacrosanct,⁸⁹ is it not possible that Africa is suffering from its own ‘Twenty Year Crisis’? As European states fought bloody (inter and intra-state) wars for centuries in the process of state formation and consolidation, is violent conflict also not inevitable amongst nascent African states? While the brutality of the hostilities may not have waned in contemporary conflicts, the geo-political circumstances certainly have. Aid conditionality

⁸⁷ Ibid. pg200.

⁸⁸ Ibid. pg201.

⁸⁹ Makumi Mwangi, "Borders, Frontiers and Conflict in the Horn of Africa: Some Preliminary Hypotheses" (paper presented at the International Workshop on the Horn of Africa: Between Post War Reconstruction and Fragmentation, Bad Honef, Germany, 29 August-2 September 2000), pg2.

and humanitarian norms no longer allow for a period of violent confrontation of the state and its actors.

Laurie Nathan in his article, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, elaborates further:

Conflict is also a natural consequence of major reform, and of popular pressure for fundamental political or economic change... Where a state lacks the resources and expertise to resolve disputes and grievances, manage competition and protect the rights of citizens, individuals and groups may resort to violence.⁹⁰

Thus belligerency may be a common phase amongst weak states but it might also be desirable to instigate fundamental political and social change. Donor literature on conflict in Africa describe the outbreak of armed hostilities as the worst-case scenario when the “resort to violence may be an act of desperation in response to a *perceived* worst-case scenario”.⁹¹ Nathan supports ‘grievance’ as another motive why conflict might be preferable as a strategy for change:

Just as our understanding of conflict informs the nature of peace initiatives, so too does our notion of “peace”. For the governments and inhabitants of stable Western democracies, this concept is not problematic. Defined as the absence of widespread physical violence, peace is deemed to be an unqualified good in terms of orderly politics and the sanctity of life. The protagonists in a civil war have an entirely different outlook, however. Oppressed groups may prize freedom and justice more than peace.⁹²

Nathan is particularly critical of Western support for “peace” if the cessation of hostilities supersedes justice in the quest for a political settlement. “In situations of systemic injustice, the attainment of peace entails radical change rather than the preservation of order”.⁹³ He invokes Johan Galtung’s concept of “negative” and “positive” peace,

⁹⁰ Nathan, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," pg2.

⁹¹ Ibid.: pg4.

⁹² Ibid.: pg2.

⁹³ Ibid.

differentiating between the absence of physical violence and the absence of structural violence.⁹⁴

Western thinking on conflict is not new, despite the relatively recent development of the sub-field of conflict management and resolution in International Relations. It has long been a subject of art, political philosophy, sociology and anthropology amongst other fields. However examples of current donor literature are very much a product of recent advances in human rights norms and the merger of the development and security agendas. As the referent object to be secured has evolved from the state to the individual human being, it would seem natural to examine the effects of conflict not only in accordance with the political and economic objectives of the state, but also in terms of the impact on the safety and well-being of the individual and his community. This has coincided with the development in the past fifty years of a substantial corpus of law regarding the rights of the individual and social, ethnic, and religious groups. This particular interpretation of conflict in Africa as retarding development and generally harmful to society and individuals is consistent with the foreign policy aims of Western donors.¹ Using policy statements and documents from the Canadian and British government I will attempt to demonstrate why conflict is viewed negatively amongst these specific donors.

Around 1996, the then-Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, began to express a new direction in Canadian foreign policy, informed by a belief in human security. In a series of addresses to the United Nations General Assembly and

⁹⁴ Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage, 1996).

Security Council he elaborated what the Canadian government felt should be the new security priorities of the 'New World Order':

...in the aftermath of the Cold War, we have re-examined and redefined the dimensions of international security to embrace the concept of sustainable human security. There has been a recognition that human rights and fundamental freedoms, the right to live in dignity, with adequate food, shelter, health and education services, and under the rule of law and good governance, are as important to global peace as disarmament measures. We are now realizing that security cannot be limited to the state's domain, but must incorporate civil society.⁹⁵

He went on to link human rights and democratic principles to the prevention of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. A year later he returned to the UN General Assembly to further articulate, the changing nature of conflict from inter-state to intra-state and the challenges this posed to world stability and peace. Axworthy suggested that the traditional rules and means of international diplomacy were ill equipped to deal with the 'new challenges'.⁹⁶ A 'new tool box' of foreign policy options, including increased collaboration with non-governmental organizations (at the local, national, regional and international level), greater emphasis on multilateralism, and partnerships between the North and the South. Thus human security posed serious challenges to established notions of the primary actors of international relations and the referent object to be secured. "...people – not states – are subjects of global relations, and the security and basic rights of people – not merely the absence of military conflict between states – are fundamental to world stability and peace".⁹⁷ Unsurprisingly, Axworthy had to respond to criticism regarding the infringement of the sovereignty of the state:

⁹⁵ Lloyd Axworthy, (paper presented at the 51st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 24 1996), pg4.

⁹⁶ Lloyd Axworthy, (paper presented at the 52nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 25 1997).

⁹⁷ Lloyd Axworthy, April 19 2000.

This does not mean that the state is obsolete. On the contrary. For one thing, human security does not weaken sovereignty, but strengthens it by reinforcing democratic, tolerant, open institutions and behaviour. For another, the state remains the most powerful instrument for pursuing collective action.⁹⁸

The language of human security has allowed Canada to revisit favourite themes of multilateralism, peacekeeping, and social justice. It allows Canada to carve out its own foreign policy identity out of the shadow of its dominating neighbour, the USA, treating delicate issues such as democratization and human rights without appearing to infringe upon (African) state sovereignty. By creating a unanimous discourse that conflict is undesirable and dangerous, little space is left to debate the merits of the proposed 'solutions' of political and economic liberalization:

Those who have suffered under colonialism and other outside involvement in their countries might well be sceptical. However, preventing abuse, stopping atrocities and dealing with the impact of war are also their issues, pertaining to their realities and clearly affecting stability in their backyards. Others argue that the promotion of human security diverts attention and funds from the more basic priority of development. But far from being mutually exclusive, human security and human development are just opposite sides of the same coin. It is hard to devote resources to improving GDP when they are being spent to repair the ravages of war.

By comparing human security to development, who could argue against the aspiration of development?

The British government in its framework document has also stressed that conflict is an impediment to development. It focused on the economic impact of armed hostilities. Generally, it is assumed to be one of the leading causes of poverty in Africa. "War has a direct and immediate economic impact through the physical disruption it

⁹⁸ Ibid.

creates, denying access to land, key resources or markets".⁹⁹ The insecurity caused by violent conflict is assumed to damage national and regional infrastructure, markets and investment confidence. It is also attributed to hyperinflation and an unstable currency. "The World Bank estimates that conflict in Africa is causing a loss of 2% annual economic growth across the continent".¹⁰⁰ It further estimates that refugees cost host countries direct costs of \$530 million per year.¹⁰¹ The British document complained that neighbouring countries are not the only ones to bear the 'burdens' of conflict:

Europe in particular has to cope with the consequences of the increasing flow of asylum seekers and economic migrants from Africa. The failure to find effective solutions to conflict in Africa also damages the reputation of the United Nations. Africa now takes up 60% of the Security Council's time and considerable international resources...¹⁰²

Furthermore, Western governments appear preoccupied by the organized crime, such as arms deals, money laundering and drug smuggling, which are facilitated by the chaos of conflict.

Conclusion

By examining documents on conflict from the World Bank, OECD-DAC, and the Canadian and British governments, it is clear that for Western donors there is an importance in conceptualizing the problem of conflict in Africa as social, politically and economically undesirable. By the production of a stereotypical typology of conflict in Africa as barbaric, widespread and destructive, and the favouring of internal causes for the prevalence of armed chaos, donors are able to legitimize their discourse and the peacebuilding orthodoxy of market liberalization and democratization. Ashis Nandy an

⁹⁹ Department of International Development, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," pg11.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pg12.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Indian academic on development questions the benefit that development policies, such as state-building have for Lesser Developed Countries. He states "Development is a project that brings homogenized, standardized solutions to essentially pluralistic societies committed to plural ways of knowing and being, and living and doing."¹⁰³ Besides eventually reducing African dependence on aid, and guiding nascent African states to behave like 'normal states', it appears that Western intervention in conflict 'ridden' Africa is in donors' strategic, economic and political interest. This chapter has argued that the current 'peacebuilding orthodoxy' so prevalent in the contemporary literature on security and development originates largely from donor and academic understandings of conflict in Africa.

¹⁰³ Smitu Kothari, "Revisiting the Violence of Development: An Interview with Ashis Nandy," *Development*, 47, no. 1 (2004): pg10.

Part One

Small Arms, Light Weapons and Peacebuilding

Chapter 2:

*Small Arms and Light Weapons:
Supply Side Policy Responses*

Chapter 2: Small Arms and Light Weapons: Supply Side Policy Responses

Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, former German Chancellor Willy Brandt stated ‘Development policy is peace policy’, highlighting poverty reduction and social justice issues as the essential preconditions for preventing war and managing conflict. A quarter of a century later, development discourse seems to have inversed Brandt’s words to ‘Peace policy is development policy’.¹ It is through this logic that traditional security programs such as arms control and (practical) disarmament have become integrated into a broader development strategy named ‘peacebuilding’, which also promote programmes such as good governance, development of the rule of law and security sector reform. This short chapter will explore why small arms and light weapons became a concern for donors and development practitioners. It will discuss the humanitarian effects of weapons proliferation. The chapter introduces current international efforts to stem the flow of firearms to countries experiencing armed conflict, and why these have failed. This discussion will argue that international efforts to restrict small arms proliferation solely based on supply side measures, such as export controls and tracing are insufficient. More efficient means of dealing with the challenges of weapons in conflict areas will require addressing troublesome normative issues such as the role of export countries in the international arms trade and what actors have the right be armed.

¹ Sami Faltas and Wolf-Christian Paes, "The Problem of Small Arms in Developing Countries: The current international debate and recommendations for Development Cooperation, in particular Technical Cooperation," (Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2001), 9.

Small Arms and Light Weapons: a New Arms Control Challenge?

Broadly speaking, small arms are those weapons designed for personal use, and light weapons are designed for use by several persons. They may be categorized as small arms: revolver and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine guns; assault rifles; and light machine guns.² Light weapons are: heavy machine guns; hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launcher; portable anti-aircraft guns; portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles; and portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems. These definitions are drawn from the *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms* (UN document A/52/298, 27 August 1997); but I have chosen to exclude mortars of calibers less than 100mm and landmines as these weapons are covered by literature that is separate and distinct from small arms and light weapons, largely because of the nature of their usage. "Unlike landmines, artillery shells, mortar shells and iron bombs, small arms are very discriminate weapons. In the hands of responsible and well-trained individuals they should create casualties where and when intended."³

There are additional characteristics of small arms, which distinguish them from other conventional arms and promote their use by non-state actors in intra-state conflicts. While small arms should only be used by legitimate and sanctioned state actors, such as security personnel, the armed forces and the police, their design and cost do not preclude use by non-state actors. In fact, firearms, or guns that are intended for use by individual civilians for non-military use such as self-protection, hunting or for other sport, share

² I would also include homemade small arms, which are not uncommon in Africa. These weapons are often adaptations or copies of existing small arms made by blacksmiths or indigenous designs occasionally made of wood.¹

³ Major (Ret'd) David DeClerq, "Trends in Small Arms and Light Weapons Development: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dimensions," (International Security Research and Outreach Programme, Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 1999), 44.

many of the same characteristics as their military relations. Primarily, this genre of weapon is crafted to be easily transported, either by an individual in the case of small arms or by two or more people, a pack animal or a light vehicle in the case of light weapons. Their portability allows for “mobile operations where heavy mechanized and air forces are not available or are restricted in their capabilities owing to difficult mountain, jungle or urban terrain”.⁴

It is not coincidental that the most ubiquitous arms in intra-state conflicts, such as the AR-15/M-16, Kalashnikov AK-47/AK-74, Fabrique National (FN) Fusil Automatique Léger (FAL), Heckler & Koch (H&K) G-3 (Gewehr), all weigh between 4-5 kg loaded and measure no more than 110 cm.⁵ The reduced weight of these guns lower the combat load of soldiers increasing the amount of ammunition that each soldier can carry.⁶ In addition, the aforementioned guns are extremely durable and can be used in extreme conditions, such as heat and damp, or environments ranging from the desert to the jungle. Small arms and light weapons also have fewer moving parts (which are prone to breakdown) than larger conventional weapons.⁷ As a result, it is not unusual with some maintenance for a weapon to continue to be operational for up to 40 years.⁸ Their lightweight, reliability and minimal maintenance and logistics required for use are well suited to protracted combat, often a characteristic of intra-state conflict. Furthermore, small arms and light weapons are simple to handle and their operation can be taught

⁴ Paragraph 27 a, "Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms," (United Nations, 1997).

⁵ DeClerq, "Trends in Small Arms and Light Weapons Development: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dimensions," 66.

⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁷ For example, the AK-47/AK-74 has only nine moving parts and can be disassembled and reassembled very quickly. Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2001: Profiling the Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 17.

⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (Geneva: ICRC, 1999), 21.

quickly, facilitating their use by non-state actors, such as civilians and even children, who may not have been well-trained or educated. Finally, various studies conducted by the US army regarding small arms use in combat situations during and after World War II indicate that 73% of all engagement occurred at less than 100 metres.⁹ As the range for combat engagement is for the most part short, overall small arms provide highly effective weapons taking into consideration their “lethality, accuracy, range, ability to acquire and/or engage multiple targets and different types of targets, ease of use, reliability, ease of maintenance, and combat sustainability”.¹⁰

Unlike larger conventional weaponry, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition can be easily concealed and smuggled, facilitating clandestine transportation and trade. Without provision for marking and tracing, the weapons are extremely difficult to track.¹¹ Partly this is due to the complicated nature of the trade in small arms. While it is very difficult to generalize about the nature and scope of the global small arms trade, the Small Arms Survey has attempted to demystify the industry. They estimate that there are over 600 companies worldwide that are involved in some aspect of production, either of components or as end producers.¹² The burgeoning number of companies is legally producing in at least 95 countries.¹³ Ambiguously, the increasing number of countries and companies producing weapons does not necessarily indicate an increase in the manufacturing capacity or value and volume of the small arms industry.¹⁴ The recent

⁹ DeClerq, "Trends in Small Arms and Light Weapons Development: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dimensions," 8.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹ The 2001 UN conference on the “Illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects” included a recommendation on marking weapons, however it is far from certain that all producers will comply, reducing the effectiveness of the policy.

¹² Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2001* 11.

¹³ Ibid. 16.

¹⁴ Ibid. 12.

proliferation of producers and suppliers during the 1990s is mainly due to the break up of the Soviet Union, trends in privatization of arms manufacturers and licensed production. These changes in the global small arms industry do however have important implications for recent efforts to control and regulate the licit and illicit trade and transfer of guns and ammunition.

However, until the 1990s, there were very few attempts to regulate and control the diffusion of small arms. Primarily, this was due to the fact that until the process of decolonization had terminated, weapons were not widespread in developing societies. Albeit with some exceptions, "in general their effects were confined to particular conflict zones, and not seen as a problem with spillover effects and potentially harmful consequences regionally or globally".¹⁵ Secondly, the arms control agenda during the Cold War was dominated by superpower concerns over the seemingly more urgent threats posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Conventional weapons as a whole were not considered a proliferation issue, underpinned by the tacit acknowledgement that every state had a sovereign right to self-defense, legitimizing the possession of conventional weapons. Moreover, small arms and light weapons had obvious uses for national security and public order.¹⁶ This logic has changed for reasons, which I explored in the first chapter. Now that there is new-found interest in small arms issues, policymakers have found that there are significant differences between the conventional and small arms trade, which render the control of small arms and light weapons proliferation particularly problematic. Unlike large weapons systems, whose

¹⁵ Keith Krause, "The Challenge of Small Arms and Light Weapons" (paper presented at the Third International Security Forum, Kongresshaus Zurich, Switzerland, 19-21 October 1998), 2.

¹⁶ Keith Krause, "Small Arms and Light Weapons: Proliferation Processes and Policy Options," (International Security Research and Outreach Programme, International Security Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 2000), 9.

production usually remains state-owned or authorized, small arms production cannot be controlled by supply-side restrictions due to increasing privatization and licensed production.¹⁷ As well, the sales of small arms often are negotiated through brokers; these legal transfers to domestic non-state actors introduce a middleman to the process that is uncommon in sales of larger conventional weapons. Due to the brokers, it is extremely difficult to control the licit and illicit re-transfer of weapons to non-national, non-state actors. Major purchasers and consumers of small arms include: insurgent groups; organized crime; private security/military companies; private dealers and individuals.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, small arms experts note a disconcerting link between the illicit trafficking of small arms and trans-national crime, such as drug cartels and traders in contraband goods.¹⁹

With the increasing plethora of suppliers and producers and the clandestine trade in used weapon, small arms can be very easily acquired for less than the manufacturing costs. In order to address this supply-side problem, the government of Canada proposed a *Global Convention Prohibiting the International Transfer of Military Small Arms and Light Weapons to Non-State Actors*.²⁰ Although there has been support from like-minded states such as Belgium and Norway, this proposal seems to have found more backing from NGOs than with governments.²¹ Initially, a paragraph that stated 'Exporting countries will supply small arms only to Governments, either directly or through entities

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 19.

¹⁹ Paragraph 20, "Report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms," (United Nations, 1999).

²⁰ Ginette Saucier, "Small Arms Proliferation and Peacebuilding: A Policy Paper for Discussion," (Ottawa: DFAIT, 1998), 1. Lloyd Axworthy, "Notes for an Address" (paper presented at the International NGO Consultations on Small Arms Action, Orillia, Canada, 19 August 1998), 6-7.

²¹ Advisory Council on International Affairs, "Africa's Struggle: Security, Stability and Development," (Ministry for Development Cooperation, The Netherlands, 2001), 22. Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the human cost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 182.

authorized to procure arms on behalf of Governments' was included in preparatory documents for the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. However, several countries privately and publicly voiced their discomfort with a measure, which could restrict their sovereign right to produce, import and export weapons legally for the purpose of national defense or other interests secured by covert operations. Others argued that tackling unrestricted small arms proliferation necessitates a discussion of legal arms, which are the source of most illicit transfer. In this instance, might prevailed. The United States rejected any compromise and thus conspicuously, it was not included in the final Programme of Action agreed upon at the 2001 UN conference despite unanimous support from the African bloc of countries.²² Although the United States was the most vocal delegation in voicing opposition to various initiatives at the 2001 UN conference, they were by no means alone. Various authors have highlighted the perceived failure of the conference amongst NGOs and delegations advocating a control of small arms proliferation, as an indication of a more profound problem plaguing the debate surrounding light weapons; there is a lack of norms regarding who has the right to lawfully acquire, possess and use small arms and light weapons. The fact that the licit trade and especially transfer to sub-state actors, stricter controls on military style weapons and standards on marking and tracing were not included on the conference agenda only serves to reinforce the notion that there is no normative consensus on small arms which is leading practical aspects in the field.²³

²² Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002* 224-25.

²³ Aaron Karp, "Small arms and the limits of international consensus," *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development* 1, no. 2 (2001). Natalie Goldring, "Small Arms: towards an integrated model," *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development* 1, no. 2 (2001).

The Effects of Small Arms Proliferation

“Civilians constitute over 80% of casualties in armed conflict today; more than 1 million people die each year from these conflicts – 90% of which are *caused* by small arms... These are truly small arms of mass destruction.”²⁴

In gun control advocacy literature, it is claimed that 80-90% of casualties in contemporary conflict are civilians. This is often cited as the primary negative consequence of small arms proliferation and holds great power in eliciting an emotive response. However, upon closer examination, this figure seems exaggerated and methodologically suspect.²⁵ Recycled by NGOs, international organizations and even cited in peer-reviewed articles in medical journals, there is no indication of how this estimate was attained.²⁶ According to the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) own database of surgical activities in areas of conflict since 1991, 35% of those admitted for weapons injuries were female, male below the age of 16, or male aged 50 and above.²⁷ However, they themselves admit to the difficulty of gathering accurate data in specific conflict situations that generate high levels of civilian casualties, such as those based on religious, ethnic or cultural division. “These situations tend to be those without a sustained international presence, and estimating the number of individuals killed, wounded, let alone determining their combat status is either not done, or relegated to

²⁴ Emphasis added. Lloyd Axworthy, "Address by the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs" (paper presented at the United Nations Security Council Session on Small Arms and Light Weapons, New York, 24 September 1999), 1.

²⁵ DeClerq, "Trends in Small Arms and Light Weapons Development: Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dimensions," 7.

²⁶ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," 16.

²⁷ These individuals are presumed to be non-combatants. David Meddings, "Are most casualties non-combatants?," *British Medical Journal* 317 (1998): 1249.

educated guesswork.”²⁸ Thus a global figure of civilian casualties caused by small arms seems unreliable and misleading. This is only one disturbing example of the oversimplification of the policy challenges of conventional weapons by the proliferation of actors interested in small arms issues.

What can be stated with confidence is the general observation that despite the norm of international humanitarian law (IHL) which is meant to minimize the effects of conflict on non-combatants, such as the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Additional Protocol of 1977, IHL is not being respected as civilian death and injury in recent armed conflicts are unacceptably high.²⁹ While the exact percentage of civilian casualties is not known, it appears that the aggregate trend over the last century is towards an increasing proportion of non-combatant injury and fatality.³⁰

Furthermore there is also the concern that violations of IHL is impeding the delivery of relief assistance and endangering humanitarian staff, highlighting the convergence of security and development concerns. In 1998, a survey of senior ICRC field staff representing 41 missions worldwide revealed that 70% of respondents had witnessed armed security threat of either expatriate or local staff.³¹ Furthermore, 60% said that ICRC operations were interrupted by armed security threats once or more a

²⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," 16.

²⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and Violations of International Humanitarian Law and the Deterioration of the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (Oslo: Norwegian Red Cross, 1998). "Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (United Nations, 1999).

³⁰ R.M. Garfield and A.I. Neugut, "Epidemiologic Analysis of warfare. A historical review," *JAMA* 266 (1991). Meddings, D, "Civilians and War: A Review and Historical Overview of the Involvement of Non-Combatant Populations in Conflict Situations," *British Medical Journal* (Forthcoming).

³¹ This included firing of a weapon at or near ICRC staff, the use of a weapon to threaten ICRC staff or to commit a robbery. International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," 44.

month.³² In a Small Arms Survey report entitled *Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons* the findings were no less grim. Between 1992-1999 UN agencies including the UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP have recorded 103 violent deaths of staff attributed to small arms and many more incidents of injury, harassment, intimidation, kidnapping and extortion perpetrated with guns.³³ The continued use of small arms after the end of formal hostilities or in situations of prolonged low-level conflict have obliged humanitarian and development agencies to take notice of what was once considered a security matter. They cite armed guards; convoys; air delivery of aid instead of by ground transport; and the evacuation of staff, as common examples of the additional 'operational costs' where insecurity is a persistent condition of the field operation.³⁴ Although it is not possible to prove a direct causal relationship between the availability of weapons and deterioration in the condition of civilians or violations of IHL in conflicts, there does seem to be a strong correlation, which may indicate other characteristics of the changing nature of violent conflicts in contemporary times.

Increasing incidents of violations of international humanitarian law may be linked to changes in trends of the users of small arms. While guns have a recorded presence in Africa since colonial times, their use, even during the wars of de-colonization, were primarily amongst formal combatants. Trends of wide-spread proliferation of small arms among irregular sub-state combatants on the continent began in the 1960s during a period of increasing competition between the superpowers, as the US and USSR armed

³² Ibid., 43.

³³ Eric Berman and Robert Muggah, "Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons," (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2001), 37.

³⁴ Ibid., 49-51.

insurgents (and governments) sustaining proxy wars in Southern Africa and in the Horn region.³⁵ Due to their durability, these large caches of weapons have continued to circulate between regions, joined by a massive influx of small arms from former Soviet-Bloc countries after the end of the Cold War.³⁶ The downsizing of armed forces following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, coupled with surplus stockpiles in weapons producing countries such as the Ukraine, Bulgaria and Russia, resulted in a large supply of small arms on the global market for those willing to pay in hard currency.³⁷ Recently traditional suppliers of weapons and ammunition have had to compete with thirteen local African producers, such as the Belgian-financed FN Herstal ammunition factory in Kenya, or the Chinese-licensed bullet and small arms factory in Uganda.³⁸ All of these African factories, with the exception of South Africa, are state-owned.³⁹ As a result of the massive influx of weapons into the continent, the recycling of guns used in previous conflicts, and the increasing capacity for local production, the prices of small arms have remained affordable in Africa, even for non-state actors. These supply factors, coupled with the particular demand factors of the region, have resulted in a new type of arms control and humanitarian challenge.

³⁵ State-to-state transfers to sub-Saharan Africa during this time were comprised primarily of heavy, high-maintenance equipment such as jet fighters, helicopters and tanks, while grey and black market sales to sub-state actors involved mostly low maintenance small arms and light weapons. Bureau of Intelligence and Research and Bureau of Public Affairs, "Arms and conflict in Africa," (Washington, DC: State Department, United States of America, 1999), 3.

³⁶ Military spending in Africa initially fell in the period between 1989-1997. It is believed that this was due to reduced spending on military hardware such as second-hand conventional weapons systems (i.e. tied aid) and does not necessarily indicate a reduction in the demand for small arms.

³⁷ BICC Conversion Survey 1997. p103-139. Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2001* 33-36. Advisory Council on International Affairs, "Advisory Report 17 Africa's Struggle," 20.

³⁸ The thirteen unconfirmed ammunition and/or small arms producing African countries are: Algeria; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Ethiopia; Guinea; Kenya; Morocco; Nigeria; South Africa; Sudan; Tanzania; Uganda; and Zimbabwe. Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2001* 52-53. Mutahi Ngunyi, "Arms Crisis is not inherently African," *The Nation*, August 13 2001.

³⁹ Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2001* 41.

Besides the sanctioned representatives of the state, such as the police and armed forces, the users of small arms have expanded to include a variety of sub-state actors in Africa. These include: private military companies, private security companies, mercenaries, state-sponsored militias, organized communal groups, insurgents, terrorists, refugees, criminals and otherwise law-abiding individual citizens.⁴⁰ Peter Herby, a legal expert with the ICRC declared:⁴¹

When military type weapons become available to broad segments of the population, including undisciplined groups, bandits, insecure individuals and even children, the task of ensuring a basic knowledge of humanitarian law among those in possession of such arms becomes difficult if not impossible.

These actors, especially irregular forces, in contrast to disciplined regular armed forces, tend not to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. Worryingly, experts have remarked that many of the intra-state conflicts are fought in populated areas, without concern for established norms of international law, increasing the likelihood of IHL violations.⁴²

Studies conducted by the ICRC in Cambodia and Afghanistan, indicate that the occurrence of casualties continues to remain significant after the end of formal conflict in areas where combatants were not disarmed.⁴³ The high levels of proliferation of small arms in the Afghanistan case study actually resulted in a level of increased mortality and

⁴⁰ Private military companies (PMCs) are corporate entities providing *offensive* services, designed to have a military impact in a given situation that are generally contracted by governments. Whereas private security companies (PSCs) are corporate entities that provide *defensive* services to protect individuals and property, frequently used by multinational companies in the extractive sector, humanitarian agencies and individuals in situations of conflict or instability. Sami Makki et al., "Private Military Companies and the Proliferation of Small Arms: Regulating the Actors," (BASIC, International Alert, Saferworld, 2001), 4.

⁴¹ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and Violations of International Humanitarian Law and the Deterioration of the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," 58.

⁴² Paragraph 16, "Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms."

⁴³ Generally there is a dearth of reliable empirical information about the effects of small arms proliferation, therefore no study specific to the African region is available. International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," 29-41.

only a slight decrease in the level of injury from that observed during the period of conflict.⁴⁴ The ICRC study noted that most of the injuries were not related to landmines and therefore “required an act of volition on the part of the weapons user”.⁴⁵ An epidemiologist working on the studies concluded that the continued proliferation of small arms in societies, which have undergone armed conflict indicated that weapons were seen as a legitimate means of resolving differences and remained an important risk factor for sustained violence.⁴⁶ According to some development agencies, the sustained availability of small arms results in a ‘gun culture’ or ‘cultures of violence’ where the use of force is favoured over non-violent conflict management methods.⁴⁷ Therefore although weapons may not cause conflict, their diffusion in society intensifies the lethality of violent disputes, especially when the state is unable to manage and resolve the conflict non-violently.

The proliferation of arms amongst sub-state actors and often the superior firepower of their weapons, have greatly eroded the state-centric norm of the monopoly of the use of force. Traditionally, security, both internal and external, was a collective good provided by the state. The sovereign state established a system of collective security for its citizens in exchange for its claim to monopolize the legitimate uses of violence. Hobbes speaks of a Leviathan, or sovereign power whose social pact with its citizens

⁴⁴ “The rates of weapons injury were compared between the 50 month ‘conflict’ period of January 1991 to March 1995 and the 18 month ‘post-conflict’ period of September 1995 to March 1997, when this region had come under the uncontested control of a faction that subsequently asserted control over most of the rest of the country. There was clearly no attempt at mass disarmament.” David Meddings, “Weapons injuries during and after periods of conflict: retrospective analysis,” *British Medical Journal* 315 (1997): 3.

⁴⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross, “Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” 41.

⁴⁶ Meddings, “Weapons injuries during and after periods of conflict: retrospective analysis,” 3, 10.

⁴⁷ Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence Department of International Development, United Kingdom, “The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document,” (London: 2001), 21. Faltas and Paes, “The Problem of Small Arms in Developing Countries,” 31-32. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Development Assistance Committee, *The DAC guidelines : helping prevent violent conflict, International development* (Paris: OECD, 2001) 88-89.

enabled the sovereign the right and responsibility of protecting both agents. *Leviathan* introduced the notion of a social contract between the state and society. In relation to modern day African examples, it is not uncommon for civilians to resort to arming themselves in order to protect their person and property against armed violence, banditry and organized crime, as the state loses control over its security tasks and can no longer provide the public good of security to its citizens. The inability of the state to perform its functions as expected by its citizens, and distrust of state institutions, further undermines the state's ability to govern effectively and thus its legitimacy.⁴⁸ The unfortunate consequences are a spiralling of generalized insecurity, the privatization of security in society, the acquisition of small arms by individuals and weakened states.⁴⁹ The UN Panel of governmental experts noted that:

Some of the most intractable armed conflicts being dealt with by the United Nations are those in which a recurring cycle of violence, an erosion of political legitimacy and a loss of economic viability have deprived a State of its authority to cope either with the causes or the consequences of the excessive accumulation, proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons.⁵⁰

However, as a recent Canadian government policy paper noted: "Proliferation is a problem not just because the weapons are there, but because people feel a need to possess them, wield them, trade them and use them".⁵¹ Possession amid the disparate actors are linked to complex questions related to "national and collective security, personal security, and political and economic security", or what pundits call 'demand factors'.⁵²

⁴⁸ Henny van der Graaf, "Proliferation of light weapons in Africa," *Policy Sciences* 30 (1997): 138.

⁴⁹ Chris Smith, "The Illegal Proliferation and Misuse of Light Weapons and Small Arms," (Ottawa: Ottawa Working Group, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, 1998), 3. Peter Lock, "Armed conflicts and small arms proliferation: Refocusing the research agenda," *Policy Sciences* 30 (1997): 126-7.

⁵⁰ "Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms," Paragraph 20.

⁵¹ Saucier, "Small Arms Proliferation and Peacebuilding," 7-8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.

International Efforts to deal with the Trade in Small Arms

International development pundits, from UN agencies to the World Bank and NGOs such as Oxfam, have posited that the *uncontrolled* and *excessive* availability, accumulation, transfer and abuse of small arms and light weapons threatens the stability and security needed for socio-economic development. They argue for a degree of arms control and disarmament. Over the last decade, micro-disarmament appears to have gained favour with both donors and policymakers, predicated as potentially innovative thinking at the conceptual level; a human security solution which lies “in the grey area between arms control and gun control”.⁵³ Do weapons collection programs really contribute to a new kind of arms control, centred on addressing demand side issues? What kinds of methods does practical disarmament utilize? To answer these questions it is necessary to take a step backwards to examine a simplified customary model of arms control.

A traditional model of arms proliferation of major conventional weapons systems is based on three basic assumptions.⁵⁴ Firstly, most arms production is either controlled or authorized by governments. Secondly, most transfers of weapons are between governments. Thirdly, recipient states do not produce or (re)transfer significant quantities of military hardware. As such, there are four general means of constraining the bulk of the arms trade: multilateral and/or negotiated supplier restraints; national limits on exports or embargoes; regional recipient restraint regimes; and retransfer restrictions

⁵³ Chris Smith quoted in Sarah Meek, "Buy or Barter: The History and Prospects of Voluntary Weapons Collection Programmes," (Institute for Security Studies, 1998), pg2. Here gun control refers to action taken at the *national* level to curb the proliferation of firearms, while arms control hints at a *regional*, or *international* context.

⁵⁴ Keith Krause, "Small Arms and Light Weapons: Proliferation Processes and Policy Options," (International Security Research and Outreach Programme, International Security Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 2000), pg2.

required under national export control policies.⁵⁵ However the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons seem to defy the traditional model of conventional weapons proliferation and control, designed to restrict military hardware used in interstate conflicts.⁵⁶ As discussed above, small arms are manufactured and sold by a wide variety of producers and brokers; sometimes government controlled, but increasingly within the private domain. As the costs of small arms are significantly less than major weapons systems, “current methods set up to track financial flows for illegal drug and gun deals are proving inadequate”.⁵⁷ This has seriously hindered the ability of independent analysts and non-governmental organizations, such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) to verify the transparency of small arms transactions. Their work is further impeded by the physical characteristics of the weapons; conventional methods of verification, such as satellites are useless in detecting and verifying stocks and exports. And as a category of weapons despite their widespread use in intra-state conflict, they cannot be banned, like mines, for they are a necessary tool of every state’s police and armed forces. Thus, the four traditional points of intervention can no longer be relied upon without considerable political will. Various combinations of voluntary state restrictions have been attempted, such as the European Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, or the Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and

⁵⁵ Ibid., pg4.

⁵⁶ Jeremy King, "Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation A Hindrance to Peace: Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in Post-Conflict Peace Processes," *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, 26, no. 4/5 Double Issue (1997): pg4. Denise Garcia, "Analyzing the Issue of Curbing the Unrestricted Availability and Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons" (paper presented at the Research and Education in Defense and Security Studies (REDES) Conference, Brasilia, Brazil, 7-10 August 2002), pg16.

⁵⁷ Edward Laurance, "Surplus Light Weapons as a Conversion Problem: Unique characteristics and solutions," in *Coping with Surplus Weapons: A Priority for Conversion Research and Policy Brief 3*, ed. Edward Laurance and Herbert Wulf (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 1995), pg3.

Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa. However these state-centric efforts have produced inconsistent results, largely because they involve many actors, often in the private sector, and despite the rhetoric of development agencies, the sale of small arms and ammunition rarely is perceived to pose a direct threat to national security, unlike larger weapons systems.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of actors involved in weapons production, (re)transfer and use has increased significantly leading one arms expert to exclaim "...we are not speaking of the *proliferation* of technology or capabilities and the need to limit that proliferation. More appropriately, we are speaking of the *dispersion* of weapons to all levels of society and throughout the world".⁵⁸ Those now with access to and using small arms include sub-state actors, such as untrained civilians, warlords, private military and security companies, criminals and even child-soldiers. This heterogeneous group, often highlighted by disarmament activists, exemplifies the difficulties of small arms control. Unlike restraint accords agreed upon or signed by states, "most contemporary conflicts involve a tangle of forces with conflicting claims of authority and divergent levels of accountability".⁵⁹ Moreover, each individual has his or her own motivation for possessing a weapon. And the decision to disarm lies with the individual and not the state. This peculiarity of small arms and the fact that they are needed for legitimate state security has led some analysts to protest that the problem is not the weapons, but rather the users. Herbert Wulf, the then Director of the Bonn International Center for Conversion, stated "We therefore have to realize that it is not the

⁵⁸ Winrich Kuhne (ed.), "Proceedings from the 3rd International Workshop Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures and Control of Small Arms: From Civil War to Civil Society" (Berlin, 2-4 July 1998), pg63.

⁵⁹ Michael Renner, "Small Arms, Big Impact: The Next Challenge of Disarmament," (Washington, DC: The Worldwatch Institute, 1997), pg55.

number of weapons, big or small, that make the difference between civil war and civil society, but the intent of people to opt for de-escalation, tolerance, stability, and confidence, a situation which we call 'peace'".⁶⁰

Conclusion

If micro-disarmament is truly to become a proactive demand-side response, the short-term immediate needs of conflict management will require longer-term measures to change behaviour and values regarding small arms. Sustainability of disarmament and the provision of individual security will necessitate behavioural modification not only in areas 'plagued by conflict' but also in the capital cities of arms exporting countries. In other words, "Over the longer term, a responsible arms management program that includes restraint in the production, procurement and transfer of arms is essential to the consolidation of peace".⁶¹ Far beyond the practical 'Lessons Learned' and 'Best Practices', a truly 'integrated and proportional approach' to security and development calls for a normative stance on small arms to affect all areas of policy making.

Wolfgang Richter, of the German delegation to the UN conference on disarmament, noted while there was general agreement about the need to reduce the 'excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons', none of the regions have taken a binding and comprehensive supply side approach. "The focus seems to be on the prevention of the illicit arms trade in its traditional understanding i.e. criminal breaches of existing national legislations. Reduction efforts are still limited to

⁶⁰ Kuhne (ed.), "Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures", pg62.

⁶¹ Mason and Selin, "Consolidation of Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures," 6.

three or four sub-regions with varying degrees of implementation”.⁶² Where binding agreements, such as the EU’s Code of Conduct, have been passed they do not cover the whole region (e.g. exporter in Eastern and Central Europe) and are occasionally undermined by political and financial considerations. The distinction between licit and illicit sales is artificial and unhelpful as “the differences and loopholes within and between national gun laws and control regimes are being exploited by illicit networks”.⁶³

Particular concerns include:

...covert supplies by foreign governments to non-State entities; irresponsible sale of weapons surplus authorized by States for purely commercial purposes; lack of State control over State or private arms holdings, particularly so-called “losses” of affinities; and, most importantly, the deliberate distribution of weapons by governments or opposition forces to the population in times of crisis or internal conflict.⁶⁴

There was no political agreement on these delicate issues at the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, underlying the difficulty and near impossibility of developing legally-binding conventions. One pundit observed that “The normative vacuum of arms control in peace implementation is partially due to the slow regional and international progress in codifying norms in the field of small arms”.⁶⁵ Even the UN Secretary-General in his *Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict* highlighted the lack of a normative framework for small arms, including disarmament.⁶⁶

⁶² Kuhne (ed.), “Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures”, 167.

⁶³ Ibid., 170.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 169.

⁶⁵ Fred Tanner, “Arms Control, Civil War and Peace Settlements,” *Civil Wars* 3, no. 4 (2000): 61.

⁶⁶ “Report of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict,” (United Nations, 2001), para. 86.

Part One

Small Arms, Light Weapons and Peacebuilding

Chapter 3:

*Arms Control and Practical disarmament:
Demand Side Challenges and Policy
Responses*

Chapter 3: Arms Control and Practical Disarmament: Demand Side Challenges and Policy Responses

Introduction

As the reasons for demand of small arms and light weapons vary greatly among the different states and communities in Africa, the following chapter will explore some of the socio-economic and political conditions in the Horn of Africa from an empirical perspective, which have led to the persistent demand for firearms in recent years. This discussion will be restricted to the usage of small arms in the states which comprise the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), namely, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, in order to examine sub-regional as well as localized motives.¹ My conclusions are largely drawn from fieldwork conducted by local researchers of the SALIGAD project.^{2 3} This chapter will also discuss the increasing recourse to disarmament as part of the ‘peacebuilding orthodoxy’, as the discourse on security and development merged in the post-Cold War period.

Background

Despite the relatively recent attention given to the proliferation of small arms in Africa, the use of these weapons is by no means new in the Horn of Africa. “The first firearms were probably introduced into Ethiopia as early as the beginning of the fifteenth

¹ I shall use the “Horn of Africa” interchangeably with the IGAD states.

² The project “Small Arms and Light Weapons: Assessing Issues and Developing Capacity for Peace in the Horn of Africa” was funded by the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) and Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World). Implementation of the project was led by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) as well as the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa (IRG). <http://www.saligad.org>

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century”,⁴ and have been employed widely for military purposes since the 18th century. Civilian use of firearms during the colonial period has been linked to mercantile networks and the trade in ivory, whilst cattle raiding utilizing guns was first recorded in the 1890s during a period of ‘devastating drought and epidemic’ to reconstitute the herds.⁵

So we may in fact, speak of the banality of the prevalence of small arms and light weapons, neither in terms of effects, nor as a reason for demand, but as a characteristic of the Horn of Africa. Internal conflict and/or civil war have plagued all of the IGAD states in the last thirty years, occasionally spilling over into cross-border incursions and even inter-state war, as in the case of Ethiopia and Eritrea. These conflicts left legacies of ex-combatants, trained in the use of small arms and light weapons, who were improperly disarmed and demobilized or who received no official assistance in reintegrating into civilian life at all.⁶ These armed conflicts also resulted in the accumulation of huge caches of legally procured weapons. “For example, between 1972 and 1990, Ethiopia and Somalia imported \$8 billion worth of small arms and light weapons”.⁷ And furthermore, at least three of the IGAD states, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, are confirmed to have factories capable of producing ammunition and/or small arms.⁸

What then are the novel characteristics of demand for weapons in the Horn?

Despite the historical precedent of firearms in the region, officials and community leaders

⁴ Christopher Spring, *African Arms and Armour* (London: British Museum Press, 1993) pg100.

⁵ Mustafa Mirzeler and Crawford Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda: AK-47 as change agent," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38, no. 3 (2000): pg411.

⁶ Isse Abdillahi Assowe, "Djibouti: Small Arms Focal Points," in *Proceedings from the Conference Curbing the demand side of small arms in the IGAD states: Potentials and Pitfalls*, ed. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Bonn International Center for Conversion (Bonn, Germany: BICC, 2001), pg3. For an example of gendered demobilization of soldiers in Eritrea see: Vanessa A. Farr and Kiflemariam Gebrewold (eds.), "Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns," (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2002), pg20.

⁷ Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence Department of International Development, United Kingdom, "The causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Framework Document," (London: 2001), pg15.

⁸ Mutahi Ngunyi, "Arms Crisis is not inherently African," *The Nation*, August 13 2001.

worryingly point to an increasing criminalization of the use of small arms. This has manifested itself in a significant rise in rates of armed crime in urban areas, such as rape, car jacking and theft, and commercialized cattle rustling and banditry in rural areas.⁹ Generalized insecurity and a lack of community confidence in the security sector, among other reasons, have resulted in high rates of household possession of firearms in some communities. For example, it is believed that presently 80% of able-bodied males in Somaliland own a small arm or light weapon.¹⁰ During the 1990s, police sources in Antsokia, Ethiopia, estimated that 90% of households in the area owned a gun.¹¹

Besides providing perceived security, firearms appear to possess an economic value in mostly pastoralist areas. Depending on supply and demand like any other commodity, an AK-47 has a variable price. In a barter system, it can fetch a bag of sorghum in Kotido, Uganda,¹² or two goats or a cow in Northeastern Kenya.¹³ This seems to indicate not only the prevalence of small arms but also their acceptance in certain communities and their integration into local economic activity.

Where weapons elicit a neutral or positive normative response amongst individuals and communities, there appears to be an incompatibility between the legal restrictions and the cultural norms dictating the acquisition and ownership of arms. For example, many recent studies point to the different ways in which notions of masculinity

⁹ Kizito Sabala, "The Proliferation, Circulation and Use of Illegal Firearms in Urban Centers: The case of Nairobi, Kenya," in *Small Arms in the Horn of Africa: Challenges, Issues and Perspectives Brief 23*, ed. Kiflemariam Gebrewold and Isabelle Masson (eds.) (Bonn, Germany: BICC, 2002). Dorothy Hodgson, "The Escalation of Cattle Raiding," *The Journal of African History*, 43, no. 2 (2002).

¹⁰ Mohamoud Jama Omar, "Management and Control of Small Arms: The Somaliland Experience," in *Small Arms in the Horn of Africa: Challenges, Issues and Perspectives Brief 23*, ed. Kiflemariam Gebrewold and Isabelle Masson (eds.) (Bonn, Germany: BICC, 2002), pg20.

¹¹ Tibebe Eshete and Siobhan O'Reilly Calthrop, "Silent Revolution: The Role of Community Development in Reducing the Demand for Small Arms," (World Vision, 2000), pg40.

¹² Oxfam UK, "Conflict's Children: the human cost of small arms in Kitgum and Kotido, Uganda," (Oxford: Oxfam UK, 2001), pg12.

¹³ Human Rights Watch, "Playing with Fire: Weapons Proliferation, Political Violence, and Human Rights in Kenya," (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002), pg10.

and status are becoming relevant to individual decisions to obtain guns.¹⁴ In Somaliland, local respondents to a survey on the perception of gun possession clearly valued small arms:

Those who possessed guns saw themselves as potential victors in the event of a conflict. Others argued that having a gun was a sign of prestige, power and authority. For example, a suitor who pays a dowry in camels is popular, but the suitor who can also offer a gun is believed to make a better husband. Giving a gun is a sign of wealth. It means that the person enjoys a higher quality of life and demonstrates his ability to sustain a family in the future.¹⁵

In Ethiopia, a local police captain told the participants at a SALIGAD conference “according to the culture of the society, a man is not considered to be a man unless he carries arms”.¹⁶ While in Uganda, the Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police described how firearms possession amongst senior and middle managers in both the public service and business community is “becoming more of a fashion statement than a response to a specific threat”.¹⁷ A recent UN document from the Department for Disarmament Affairs noted “A complicating factor for disarmament is that in several parts of Africa, particularly in the Horn, ownership of arms is culturally accepted”.¹⁸ Despite this fact, all of the IGAD states, except Somalia, have enacted *de jure* firearms legislation. However,

¹⁴ Farr and Gebrewold (eds.), "BICC Brief 24." Jolynn Shoemaker, "Women and Wars Within States: Internal Conflict, Women's Rights and International Security," *Civil Wars*, 4, no. 3 (2001). Wendy Cukier, "Gender and Small Arms. A Special Report for the Small Arms Yearbook Project," (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2000). Ginette Saucier, "Seizing the Advantage: Integrating Gender into Small Arms Proliferation. A Discussion Paper," (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, forthcoming). Department of Disarmament Affairs and Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, "Gender Perspectives on Small Arms," (United Nations, 2001). Joanna Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions in the Aftermath of Civil War: Key Implementation Issues," *Civil Wars*, 2, no. 2 (1999).

¹⁵ Omar, "Management and Control of Small Arms: The Somaliland Experience," pg20.

¹⁶ Bonn International Center for Conversion and Peace and Development Committee, "Proceedings from the workshop on Small Arms Issues in Different Regions of Ethiopia - Local Small Arms Control: Possible to what extent?" (Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, 27-30 August 2001), pg13.

¹⁷ Francis Rwego, "Firearms control measures in Uganda-A law enforcement perspective," in *Proceedings of the Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons Issues in Uganda: Dynamics, Concepts and Perspectives for Action*, ed. Vanessa A. Farr (Bonn, Germany: BICC, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda, 2002), pg60.

¹⁸ Department of Disarmament Affairs and Women, "Gender Briefing Note 3," pg2.

gun control laws are *de facto* not implemented, often as a consequence of weak state institutions. In other words, despite the high social value placed on weapons, states are unable to enforce their own strict legislation regarding the purchase and possession of firearms, resulting in extremely high rates of illegal gun ownership.

While traditional taboos have historically existed against projectile weapons amongst pastoralist peoples in the Horn,¹⁹ the proliferation of small arms and light weapons seems to have engendered a transformation of traditionally accepted cultural practices, which further fuels the demand for firearms. Recall that seventy percent of the total land area in the IGAD region is semi-arid and arid, supporting the largest grouping of pastoralists in the world.²⁰ These communities are largely nomadic, depending on access to water, salt licks and pasture land to maintain their livelihood through the rearing of livestock, such as camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. High rates of population growth, coupled with development programs that poorly manage natural resource scarcity, such as water intensive cash crop farming and the creation of national parks exclusively for tourism, have aggravated violent conflict amongst pastoralist communities.²¹ While these areas provide on average 20-30% of GDP to IGAD states,²² government policies since colonial times have tended not to favour pastoralist lifestyles, resulting in economic and political marginalization. Land tenure laws in the region favour sedentarism and the privatization of land, while customary regimes amongst pastoralist and agro-pastoralist groups prefer reciprocal resource use arrangements.²³ Thus increasingly, small arms are

¹⁹ Spring, *African Arms and Armour* pg118.

²⁰ Kennedy Mkutu, "Pastoralism and conflict in the Horn of Africa," (London: Saferworld, 2001), pg10.

²¹ Bonn International Center for Conversion and Peace and Development Committee, "Small Arms Issues in Ethiopia-Local Arms Control".

²² Mkutu, "Pastoralism and conflict in the Horn of Africa," pg10.

²³ Jeremy Lind and Nuur Sheikh, "Armaments, Environments," *Eco-Conflicts*, 1, no. 3 (2001): pg2. Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda," pg427.

used by communities, to guarantee their access to and use of scarce resources and grazing land, instead of traditional means of conflict management, especially during times of natural disasters, such as periods of drought.²⁴ Individuals and groups with lesser kin networks and poor access to small arms are highly disadvantaged in the current situation. Regionally and locally, the trend has resulted in a 'security dilemma' whereby actors arm themselves to increase their security, however paradoxically achieve the opposite effect.

Other traditional coping mechanisms of pastoralists, such as cattle rustling, have also undergone transformation with the wide proliferation of firearms. The motivations, means and meaning of this social practice, previously linked to the coming of age of young men, rarely resulted in a larger military engagement, as the purpose was primarily to accumulate bridewealth (in the form of livestock), to replenish family herds, and to ensure access to scarce resources.²⁵ At present, the practice is increasingly characterized as highly organized violent raids of large quantities of cattle, perpetrated by 'heavily armed multi-clan and multi-ethnic gangs', for commercial purposes.²⁶ The economic benefits, social status and power accrued from such activities in districts suffering from high levels of unemployment and poverty are frequently cited as the primary motives of the young men involved.²⁷ SALIGAD researchers were told that the proliferation of

²⁴ Ebla Haji Aden, "People with arms and grassroots research: the case of North-East Kenya," in *Proceedings of the Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons Issues in Uganda: Dynamics, Concepts and Perspectives for Action*, ed. Vanessa A. Farr (Bonn, Germany: BICC, 2002).

²⁵ Peter Marwa, "Sungusungu in Kuria: An Indigenous Approach towards the Control and Management of Small Arms," in *Small Arms in the Horn of Africa: Challenges, Issues and Perspectives Brief 23*, ed. Kiflemariam Gebrewold and Isabelle Masson (eds.) (Bonn, Germany: BICC, 2002), Spring, *African Arms and Armour* pg108. Hodgson, "The Escalation of Cattle Raiding."

²⁶ David Meddings, "Response to the presentation by Kiflemariam Gebre-wold" (paper presented at the IPPNW Conference "Aiming for Prevention: International Medical Conference on Small Arms, Gun Violence and Injury", Helsinki, Finland, 28-30 September 2001).

²⁷ Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda."

firearms has even destroyed social capital in the form of respect of elders in the community, transforming traditional hierarchical social relations.

Other users of small arms include otherwise law-abiding citizens who desire firearms in order to protect themselves and their property. This and a widespread distrust of the state and its security institutions are the reasons most often alluded to when discussing the demand for weapons in IGAD countries. A SALIGAD study conducted in Nairobi indicate that income generation through the selling, renting or leasing of official weapons by police and security officers is a widespread phenomena. This is hardly surprising due to the irregular and inadequate wages paid to the Kenyan security forces. The police in particular complained about the appalling living conditions of police barracks, the lack of promotion and training opportunities, poor equipment and insufficient numbers of vehicles and fuel due to the misappropriation of funds.²⁸

Community leaders and conference participants repeatedly cited corruption, human rights abuses, under-funded, ill-trained and ill-equipped security staff, and the inability of the state security institutions to control cross border phenomena, such as cattle raiding and the movement of people and goods, as undermining their confidence in the ability of the state to protect the interests of its citizens.²⁹ Other special issues of concern included the manipulation of identity politics by national elites and community

²⁸ Kiflemariam Gebrewold, "Exploring the relationship between human security, demand for arms and disarmament in the Horn of Africa" (paper presented at the IPPNW Conference "Aiming for Prevention: International Medical Conference on Small Arms, Gun Violence and Injury", Helsinki, Finland, 28-30 September 2001), pg4.

²⁹ Kiflemariam Gebrewold and Isabelle Masson (eds.), "Small Arms in the Horn of Africa: Challenges, Issues and Perspectives," (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 2002). Bonn International Center for Conversion and Peace and Development Committee, "Small Arms Issues in Ethiopia-Local Arms Control".. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Bonn International Center for Conversion, "Proceedings from the Conference Curbing the demand side of small arms in the IGAD states: Potentials and Pitfalls" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23-26 April 2001). Project Ploughshares Quaker United Nations Offices (QUNO-New York and Geneva), Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), "Curbing the Demand for Small Arms: Lessons in East Africa and the Horn of Africa" (Nairobi, Kenya, 12-16 December 2000).

leaders, the structural marginalization and favouring of particular ethnic groups by the state, resulting in a culture of impunity for actors who perpetrate politically motivated violence.³⁰ This general perception of the renegeing of state responsibility has been aggravated by the policy of arming local militias by some states in the Horn of Africa, such as Kenya and Uganda.³¹

In a recent report entitled *Playing with Fire: Weapons Proliferation, Political Violence and Human Rights in Kenya*, Human Rights Watch documents the involvement of high ranking government officials of the KANU party, in the formation, training and arming of Kalenjin warriors. Such activity began in 1991 with the advent of multiparty elections in Kenya. The Kalenjin warriors were instructed to carry out premeditated attacks in the Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza provinces against members of the Luo, Luhya and Kikuyu communities who were expected to support opposition candidates. "These incidences of violence, which continued in the post-election period, claimed an estimated 1,500 lives and displaced at least 300,000."³² In a bid by the ruling party KANU to ensure political dominance by the use of intimidation tactics in advance of the 2002 elections, the authority of the state was severely undermined by the lack of confidence and distrust of minority groups who were not protected by state institutions (including the police and justice system).³³ As a result, some groups resorted to organizing and arming themselves. The MP for Laikipia district made this ominous warning:³⁴

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Playing with Fire.", Cathy Majtenyi, "Government officials involved in small arms flows," *Africa News*, November 2001.

³¹ IRIN, "Uganda: Focus on Karamoja disarmament," January 10 2002, Majtenyi, "Government officials involved in small arms flows."

³² Human Rights Watch, "Playing with Fire," pg20, 63.

³³ Ibid., pg67.

³⁴ Ibid., pg68.

It should be noted that all the neighbours of the Kikuyu in Laikipia – the Maasai, Samburu, Tugen and Pokot – have guns and homeguards (referring to police reservists). The government has left only the Kikuyu without guns...I am calling on the Minister in charge of Internal Security to end insecurity in Laikipia. So far, I have been pleading with the Kikuyu to restrain themselves. I am not ready to sacrifice my political career by trying to avert tribal clashes, which is a government responsibility. (The government should defend the Kikuyu) or we shall use every way possible to defend ourselves.

In this example, the protagonists did not perceive the resort to violence, for lack of conflict resolution mechanisms either institutional or conventional, as the ‘worst case scenario’; in fact it may be understood as a possible ‘coping mechanism’. These incidents are not novel; politically motivated arming of non-state actors in Kenya dates back to the founding President Jomo Kenyatta. He “...armed the Pokot to act as a buffer zone from external raiders emanating from neighbouring countries. However, the community have turned the same guns against their immediate neighbours, with the Marakwet and Turkana suffering the most”.³⁵ The tacit surrender of the monopoly of the use of force by the state to sub-state actors, such as rebel movements and specific ethnic communities in some cases is an indication of serious state weakness if not failure in the region, although in other cases more ambiguously it indicates a survival strategy of political elites.

At the regional level, we may speak of several aggravating factors, which encourage the demand for weapons. In legislative and judicial areas, although efforts have been made, largely by international NGOs to encourage dialogue and cooperation between states,³⁶ the lack of harmonization of laws and inconsistent joint efforts at dealing with firearm issues by IGAD states remains a concern in stemming the demand and use of small arms across the region. For example, cattle rustling in Kenya is much less severely prosecuted and punished than in neighbouring Tanzania, and as a

³⁵ Ibid., pg66.

³⁶ Such as the Institute for Security Studies, Saferworld.

consequence, is more prevalent on the Kenyan side of the border.³⁷ Generally improving inter-state relations in the Horn would have a noticeable impact on the demand and circulation of small arms and light weapons. As is, the often hostile and erratic nature of relations between IGAD states results in the diffusion of arms to insurgent and militia groups, such as the arming of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Shifta separatists by the Siad Barre regime, and the support of the Somali National Movement by the Ethiopian government.³⁸

What is certain is that the individual and community motivations for acquiring and using firearms in the Horn of Africa are many and complex. They are related to historical precedence, culture, crime, socio-economic disparities, political unrest and environmental fragility and management. These dynamics are aggravated by the widespread distrust of security institutions and state failure of the IGAD countries to manage conflict both at the local and regional level. These examples drawn from the Horn of Africa mirror the complexity and multitude of ways of framing the problem of small arms proliferation, these include: Humanitarianism and Human Rights, Public Health and Criminology, Communal Conflicts, Extra-Regional Conflict Intervention; Regional Destabilization, International Terrorism Economic Development, and Good Governance. As one small arms expert noted "There is not even a clear agreement on *what* the problem is...Each approach focuses on different aspects of the problem and advocates different solutions. And of course there is no agreement on which weapons are

³⁷ Marwa, "Sungusungu in Kuria: An Indigenous Approach towards the Control and Management of Small Arms."

³⁸ Omar, "Management and Control of Small Arms: The Somaliland Experience."

of greatest concern...”³⁹ What has been agreed upon by those studying small arms use and those advocating micro-disarmament is that:

Accumulations of small arms and light weapons by themselves do not cause the conflicts in which they are used. The availability of these weapons, however, contributes towards exacerbating conflicts by increasing the lethality and duration of violence, by encouraging a violent rather than a peaceful resolution of differences, and by generating a vicious circle of a greater sense of insecurity, which in turn leads to a greater demand for, and use of, such weapons.⁴⁰

Is there a theory behind the practice of weapons collection programs?

In order to understand the potential of practical disarmament programs to promote peace, William Godnick and Edward Laurance have developed a typology of three distinct categories of weapons collection programs.⁴¹ Phase I: Disarmament by Command and Phase II: Voluntary Weapons Collection, both of which occur in the context of peacebuilding. While Phase III is micro-disarmament organized in peacetime, to reduce firearm violence of a non-political nature. Phase I transpires soon after a peace settlement is signed and often before the conflict is definitively terminated. It forms a part of the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) continuum, recovering the weapons of combatants in a public and collective manner. Phase I is the first step in “the formal disbanding of military formations, and at the individual level, ...the process of releasing combatants from a mobilized state”;⁴² while in the medium to long-term the goal is to reintegrate the soldiers and their families back into society as productive members of their community. This process is supervised and may employ “war-time structures and leaders” to ‘command’ groups of combatants to assemble and report to a

³⁹ Keith Krause, "The Challenge of Small Arms and Light Weapons" (paper presented at the Third International Security Forum, Kongresshaus Zurich, Switzerland, 19-21 October 1998), pg2.

⁴⁰ Paragraph 17, "Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms," (United Nations, 1997).

⁴¹ Chapter 1 and Chapter 8 in Joseph Di Chiaro III and Sami Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War: Micro-disarmament as an Element of Peace-building* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2001). The typology presented in this paper is largely based upon their model.

⁴² Mats Berdal, "Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars," *Adelphi Paper*, no. 303 (1996): pg39.

demobilization centre, resorting to both penalties and rewards as inducements.⁴³ Phase I is generally more coercive than the other two Phases although all weapons collection programs may have an element of force to induce compliance.

Phase II usually occurs later in the post-conflict period as a means of maintaining political stability, possibly established by Phase I disarmament. In these programs, the surrendering of arms by individuals (either ex-combatants or civilians) is entirely voluntary in exchange for rewards or to avoid legal punishment. As Phase II weapons collection programs are not a formal part of the peace agreement, micro-disarmament by coercion is not desirable as an option, although these programs may still involve demobilization. Phase II and III programs share many similarities, for example, civil society groups may organize them, to promote a norm against gun possession and use amongst individuals and the community. Both offer incentives either cash or in-kind and, often the threat of penalty for non-compliance after a period of amnesty. Both aim to reduce criminal and political violence perpetrated with firearms; however Phase III programs are conducted in 'peace time' and thus are not specifically a part of post-conflict reconstruction.

These three types of micro-disarmament may occur sequentially, as was the case in Mozambique. The UN's peacekeeping mission between April 1992 and December 1994, ONUMOZ, was mandated to "monitor and verify the cease-fire, the demobilization of forces, the collection, storage and destruction of weapons".⁴⁴ Phase I disarmament was

⁴³ Di Chiaro III and Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War* pg212.

⁴⁴ "Africa: The Challenge of Light Weapons Destruction During Peacekeeping Operations," (BASIC, 1997), pg7.

implicitly included in the peacekeeping mandate, as a part of demobilization.⁴⁵ However, due to inadequate political and financial resources the weapons collected were not destroyed, and as a consequence many guns were smuggled to neighbouring states.⁴⁶ Later Phase II programs were much more successful in collecting and decommissioning the weapons permanently. Two very different programs initiated in 1995 were conducted simultaneously, the Tools for Arms project (TAE), organized by the Christian Council of Mozambique in conjunction with national and international NGOs, and Operation Rachel, a series of collaborations between the Mozambican and South African police forces to seize weapons caches based on tip-offs between July 1995 and August 1997. The TAE project has continued to collect arms from individuals in exchange for in-kind incentives such as bicycles, hoes, construction tools, sewing machines, cement bags, school equipment, and wheelchairs.⁴⁷ By 2001, the project had collected over 200,000 small arms and light weapons.⁴⁸ Arguably, eleven years after the peace settlement in Mozambique, the Tools for Arms project may soon be considered a Phase III program.

What all three types of practical disarmament share is a dissimilarity with traditional supply-side arms control of military hardware. They deal with weapons that, largely already existed in the region in significant numbers. Illegal acquisition of the arms may have occurred through the black market, during ambushes or theft from government

⁴⁵ Alex Vines, "Disarmament in Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, no. 1 (1998): pg192.

⁴⁶ Alex Vines, "The Struggle Continues: Light Weapons Destruction in Mozambique," (BASIC, 1998), pg5.

⁴⁷ "Reversing the Tide: Report on the Small Arm Action Forum," (Project Ploughshares, 1999), pg5.

⁴⁸ Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the human cost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pg294. To put this figure of weapons collected in context, some expert estimate that up to 6 million AK47s were in circulation in 1995. FRELIMO, the ruling Leftist group alone distributed 1.5 million assault rifles to civilian for self-defence during the war. "BASIC Paper 23," pg6.

arsenals.⁴⁹ Perhaps the supply even originated from legal stocks, such as states attempting to "...legally bolster its own security and political power by arming subnational groups which support its political or social policies and act as a supplement to government security forces".⁵⁰ Furthermore, there may be legal or cultural provisions for citizens to own arms. This has led one expert, Joseph Di Chiaro, to proclaim:

Though we have couched weapons collection and destruction measure in the context of arms control, I would argue that it is not primarily an arms control measure. Rather, weapons collection and destruction is an element of *peacebuilding, conflict-prevention, potentially confidence building, and development.*⁵¹

The majority of literature on practical disarmament certainly expounds the utility of weapons collection programs as a 'peace support activity'. Their immediate role may consist of containing a crisis after a 'trigger event'. This incident, which precipitates a chain of events, could include a shocking crime such as the 1996 shooting of primary school children in Dunblane, Scotland, the breakdown of public order following the looting of government arsenals in Albania, or the mutiny of dissatisfied soldiers in the Central African Republic.⁵² In these cases, weapons collection programs have the immediate short-term objectives of reducing tensions and preventing a deterioration of public security. Long-term goals, in situations of violent conflict or rampant criminality (but not necessarily civil war), may include broader peacebuilding functions. These Phase

⁴⁹ Michael Klare differentiates this 'circulation model' of accumulation of light weapons from the 'proliferation model' of traditional trade in major conventional weapons. Edward Laurance and Sarah Meek, "The New Field of Micro-Disarmament: Addressing the Proliferation and Buildup of Small Arms and Light Weapons," (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 1996), pg15.

⁵⁰ Edward Laurance, "Small Arms and Light Weapons as a Development and Disarmament Issue: An Overview" (paper presented at the conference Converting Defense Resources to Human Development, Bonn, Germany, 9-11 November 1997), pg4.

⁵¹ Kuhne (ed.), "Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures", pg147.

⁵² Di Chiaro III and Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War* pg215-6. Elizabeth Clegg et al., "Reducing the Stock of the Illicit Trade: Promoting Best Practice in Weapons Collection Programmes," (International Alert, BASIC, Saferworld, 2001), pg6.

II or III programs act as a means of raising public awareness about the dangers of gun proliferation and misuse. Their emphasis is to change the pattern of demand for arms by encouraging non-violent means of conflict management and by introducing a social norm against the possession and use of firearms by civilians. Voluntary micro-disarmament may serve to build bridges between civil society groups and the government. For example, in El Salvador, the 'Goods for Guns' program was implemented by the private sector, the Church, NGOs and the government. It was initiated by a group of business associations who were concerned that increasing armed violence was creating an unstable environment and raising the costs of doing business, as additional resources had to be spent on private security to protect assets. The private sector was also affected by the subsequent loss of foreign investment and professional personnel due to general insecurity.⁵³ The successful collaboration between the Salvadoran government and civil society later led to increased public consultation in the drafting of new firearms legislation and the ratification of the OAS Convention.⁵⁴

It appears that micro-disarmament programs are more successful in sparking, supporting and reinforcing spin-off activities than procuring a strategic reduction in the supply of weapons in circulation. While not widely mentioned in practical disarmament literature, this opinion has been quietly discussed in several fora.⁵⁵ Records from voluntary weapons collection programs in Angola, Mozambique, Panama, and Cambodia indicate that many of the arms surrendered were 'unserviceable' or of very poor quality.⁵⁶

⁵³ Sverre Lodgaard (ed.), "Proceedings from the conference Practical Disarmament" (Oslo, 9-10 May 2001), pg39.

⁵⁴ Organization of American States Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Material. Ibid., pg40.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Claire Pike and Mark Taylor (ed.), "Proceedings from the Forum Swords for Ploughshares: Microdisarmament in Transition from Conflict" (Montreal, Canada, 21-22 September 1999).

⁵⁶ Berdal, "Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars," pg34.

Secondly, the Salvadoran initiative concluded that despite a crime prevention context, the program did not disarm “criminals to any large extent”.⁵⁷ Thirdly, most combatants own more than one weapon, but only surrender one or occasionally none at all. Individual soldiers may voluntarily report to the demobilization camps, however they may concurrently embrace the concept of “*sécurité d’abords*”, in which they keep a weapon as a life insurance policy.⁵⁸ And “large stocks are likely to remain unreported at the time of peace agreements, since the parties might not be entirely sure that the peace will hold – or they might speculate on future income.”⁵⁹ Even a World Bank study of African cases noted:

Weapons buy-back programmes have had limited medium-term impact in reducing the number of weapons circulating in countries which have: 1) porous borders with countries with active weapon markets; 2) lack of capacity to enforce regulations on the open carrying and criminal use of weapons; 3) a political, economic or security climate which enhances the security and economic value of owning and using a weapon.⁶⁰

As of yet, there has not been a comparative study of the above effects in practical disarmament to analyse whether the real total of serviceable weapons collected and destroyed demonstrates a lower than expected strategic impact of decommissioning. Certainly there would be many methodological problems such as assessing the total numbers of weapons circulating amongst civilians and ex-combatants compared with the figures of arms surrendered. And some analysts rightly claim that “Defining the success of these programmes through quantitative measures *alone*, ignores the nature of the

⁵⁷ Clegg et al., "International Alert Briefing 12," pg7. Lodgaard (ed.), "Proceedings from the conference Practical Disarmament", pg41.

⁵⁸ Di Chiaro III and Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War* pg66. Kuhne (ed.), "Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures", pg105.

⁵⁹ Kees Kingma, "Demobilization of combatants after civil wars in Africa and their reintegration into civilian life," *Policy Sciences*, 30 (1997): pg156-7.

⁶⁰ "Demobilisation and Reintegration of Military Personnel in Africa: The Evidence from Seven Country Studies," (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1993), pgpara. 173.

transactions pursued through these programmes and their contribution to rebuilding the security – physical and psychological – of communities affected by violence”.⁶¹ However this does not diminish the importance of understanding whether weapons collection programs are effectively reaching the ‘high risk users’. If they are not, perhaps we need to re-visit who are the target groups of practical disarmament, and to re-evaluate whether the widening utility claims of the programs are related to their limited strategic impact.

Many of the growing claims underlining the usefulness of practical disarmament are linked to more abstract concepts rather than their ability to significantly reduce the supply of weapons in circulation. Advocates suggest that micro-disarmament plays an important role in supporting the peace process by encouraging confidence building amongst the antagonists and by providing a symbolic achievement in the form of public destruction of the weapons, such as the ‘Flamme de la Paix’ in Mali. Given the strategic limits of previous programs, these may be more appropriate objectives and goals. The premise that practical disarmament may increase the trust between warring parties in an intra-state conflict is largely based upon William Zartman’s legacy for conflict resolution theory that at certain stages of a conflict, when both parties perceive themselves to be in a Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS), in which neither side can escalate military activities to win and both are suffering sufficiently,⁶² a mediated solution is possible if seized at this crucial ‘ripe moment’. This unending period without relief, otherwise known as a stalemate, optimally should be linked to an impending sense of catastrophe, when the conflict situation predictably degenerates and the parties feel they have no ‘way out’. Zartman does not feel this type of situation necessarily means absolute or objective

⁶¹ Italics added. Pike and Taylor (ed.), "Swords for Ploughshares", pg27.

⁶² This is subjectively interpreted by the parties themselves, according to their own calculation and criteria.

political and military parity amongst the actors, but could also include a dynamic period where one party is rising and the other is slipping in the perceived power equilibrium. The zero-sum perception of a MHS is crucial in inducing a willingness to negotiate, but not necessarily in identifying a specific solution to the grievances.⁶³ Weaponry and their perceived impact on the balance of power are crucial in determining the duration and intensity of conflict. By initially limiting the availability of arms, it is assumed that micro-disarmament reduces tensions amongst the parties to the conflict and increases the likelihood that the groups in dispute will seriously engage in negotiation, arbitration and other methods of non-violent conflict resolution.⁶⁴ Laying down weapons and eventually demobilizing soldiers greatly increases transparency in intra-state conflicts which are often characterized by elevated threat perception, "poor communications, a paucity of accurate information and intelligence, fear and loathing between opposing groups, and constantly changing battle lines".⁶⁵ Practical disarmament also builds confidence by demonstrating a quantifiable commitment to the peace process.⁶⁶ The UN Secretary-General recently concluded that "The abundance of armaments available to conflicting parties, especially small arms and light weapons, is a major contributing factor to the number and intensity of armed conflicts...as well as to violations of signed peace

⁶³ Interestingly enough, Zartman takes a neutral stance towards the arming of certain actors to achieve a strategic situation amenable to MHS, one might conclude that he does not view disarmament as a tool of conflict management. Obviously this has great implications for long-term conflict management and for the resolution of the armed conflict itself.

William Zartman, ed., *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1995). William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 1, no. 1 (2001).

⁶⁴ Joanna Spear, "Arms Limitations, Confidence-Building Measures, and Internal Conflict," in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pg380.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pg379.

⁶⁶ Major (Ret'd) David DeClerq, "Light Weapons and Micro-Disarmament," (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 1997), pg22.

settlements”.⁶⁷ And thus “...the assembly, control and disposal of weapons has been a central feature of most of the comprehensive peace settlements in which the United Nations has played a peace-keeping role”.⁶⁸

However, some critics regard the largely symbolic role of weapons collection programs in peace processes as their greatest limitation. Mats Berdal hypothesized that contrary to claims, there is “no automatic or inherent relationship between the process of disarmament and the creation of a secure environment...Indeed, under certain circumstances, disarmament is likely to aggravate rather than enhance (the) security...”⁶⁹ This occurs primarily when the disarmament is partial or uneven, and coercive. For “...when conditions on the ground are fluid, central authority weak and country-wide security correspondingly lacking, the ‘peace and reconciliation process’ is highly vulnerable to changes in local allegiances, as well as to any shift in the balance of external forces”.⁷⁰ In order not to degrade the security situation further, the program should assess whether micro-disarmament will significantly disrupt the balance of power between groups if one party ‘opts out’ or decides to cheat, and how the security of those who ‘opted in’ can be assured. In Somalia, partial decommissioning had the dangerous consequence of degrading the security of the compliant individuals, leaving them victim to gangs. Such hazards could have been avoided by including all the important parties in the disarmament schemes “with due regard to the local balance of influence and power

⁶⁷ "Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (United Nations, 1999), pgpara. 65.

⁶⁸ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations," (New York: United Nations, 1995), pgpara. 62.

⁶⁹ Berdal, "Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars," pg24.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: pg28.

among contending factions".⁷¹ While at times, it is necessary to enforce compliance, it is also imperative that the third party conducting the program acts and is perceived to be impartial by the various actors.⁷² Anything less than impartiality, risks undermining the initiative, alienating those in possession of guns and involving the implementers of the micro-disarmament as a new party to the conflict. The most notable example occurred in Somalia "when UNITAF singled out General Aideed and his militias as the villains, and targeted them for coercive disarmament, it shed its cloak of neutrality, making impartial disarmament impossible".⁷³

The UN's Panel of Governmental Experts has recognized some of the dangers of failed attempts at weapons collection, they stated:

Several United Nations peacekeeping or post-conflict peace-building operations have resulted in the incomplete disarmament of former combatants owing to peace agreements or mandates which did not cover small arms and light weapons disarmament, or to shortfalls in the implementation of mandates because of inadequate operational guidance or resources. Thus, large numbers of surplus weapons became available in the conflict areas for criminal activities, recirculation and illicit trafficking.⁷⁴

In Liberia, the 'fits and starts' of disarmament and the insufficient resources of Operation Liberty, resulted in the inability of the peacekeeping force to "guarantee nation-wide security, and...extend its operation to cover all the originally agreed disarmament locations".⁷⁵ The result of semi-successful decommissioning was actually the

⁷¹ Sverre Lodgaard, "Managing Arms in Peace Processes," *Policy Sciences*, 30 (1997): pg146. The Somalia case study will be examined in greater depth in a later chapter.

⁷² French scholars make a useful distinction between 'impartiality', to be fair and unprejudiced but possibly using force to induce compliance, and 'neutrality', to be aloof or excluded from acting or taking sides in the conflict. Roland Marchal and Christine Messiant, *Les chemins de la guerre et de la paix: Fins de conflit en Afrique orientale et australe* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997).

⁷³ "BASIC Paper 23," pg4.

⁷⁴ "Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms," ppara.49.

⁷⁵ "BASIC Paper 23," pg11.

proliferation of smaller groups at the local level.⁷⁶ Furthermore, no long-term strategy was carried out to demobilize and reintegrate the soldiers back into their communities. Meanwhile disarmament itself was rushed and tied to another post-conflict activity, the scheduling of national elections.⁷⁷ “The UN concentrated foremost on disarmament for election purposes and not for disarmament for peace after the elections. The UN wanted to withdraw from Liberia only two months after the elections...It was a weakness that the international communities’ interest in elections was great and thereafter the interest in Liberia ceased”.⁷⁸ In this and many other cases, there was an over-estimation of what disarmament could achieve, largely based on the false assumption that decommissioning light weapons *alone* was sufficient in increasing security in a post-conflict environment. The lack of sustained political and financial support from the international community further undermined the process of post-conflict reconstruction. Donors were primarily interested in short-term, highly visible benchmarks of peacebuilding, such as disarmament, demobilization, and elections, rather than the more complicated tasks of ensuring public security, the reintegration of ex-combatants and regeneration of local economies. The dilemma of course is that reintegration requires opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the economy, which in post-conflict situations often entails developmental aid to absorb the large number of soldiers. In the same instance, funds for development depend on progress in disarmament programs.⁷⁹ And for disarmament programs to be acceptable to the local factions, tangible progress in development is needed, demonstrating that there are economic, social and political motivations for

⁷⁶ Berdal, "Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars," pg29.

⁷⁷ Kuhne (ed.), "Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures", pg114.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pg87.

⁷⁹ At the Berlin conference, delegates suggested funding demobilization and re-integration through assessed funds of the UN rather than voluntary contributions. Ibid., pg56.

surrendering arms. Conceptually, this vicious circle indicates that post-conflict reconstruction is not an orderly, sequential series of activities, but rather a complex and overlapping process of “cessation of hostilities, military re-organization, political transition, and social and economic reconstruction”.⁸⁰ And managing arms is only but one aspect of the peace process; it is not an end in itself.

The Shift to Micro-disarmament as an Integral Part of the ‘Peacebuilding Orthodoxy’

The attitude correlating small arms to security and development is now *de rigueur* amongst post-conflict reconstruction and development pundits, but it was not always so. While the 1995 Supplement to an Agenda for Peace is often cited as the genesis of the concept of micro-disarmament, largely it re-articulated the link between “...disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons...” to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding articulated in the earlier Agenda for Peace.⁸¹ Here the emphasis was on preventing future conflicts, not necessarily in promoting development. The real watershed in which the link between small arms, security and development was articulated in GA resolutions 51/45:

Considering that the illicit circulation of massive quantities of small arms throughout the world impedes development and is a source of increased insecurity,

Considering also that the illicit international transfer of small arms and their accumulation in many countries constitute a threat to the populations and to

⁸⁰ J. 'Bayo Adekanye, "Arms and Reconstruction in Post-Conflict Societies," *Journal of Peace Research*, 34, no. 3 (1997): pg359.

⁸¹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping: Report of the Secretary-General," (New York: United Nations, 1992), ppara. 55.

national and regional security and are a factor contributing to the destabilization of States,⁸²

Convinced that a *comprehensive and integrated approach* towards certain practical disarmament measures, such as, inter alia, arms control, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons, confidence-building measure, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, demining and conversion, often is a prerequisite to maintaining and consolidating peace and security and thus provides a basis for effective rehabilitation and social and economic development.⁸³

In the almost two years, between the Supplement for an Agenda for Peace and the GA resolutions 51/45, this new strategy guiding the practice of disarmament was being pioneered in Mali. The Secretary-General's report, submitted in January 1995, on behalf of the UN fact-finding mission to Mali found that the illegal proliferation of light weapons was a significant problem, which would require a sub-regional approach to disarmament accompanied by a socio-economic package addressing the broader issue of security.⁸⁴ It was emphasized that the collection and destruction of weapons depended on a "proportional and integrated approach to development and security", what is also known as the "Security First" approach.⁸⁵ Malian government consultations with political parties, civil servants, unions, religious and civil society groups, stressed in their findings the importance of improving the security situation of ordinary citizens in order to encourage the surrender of weapons and socio-economic development. Thus a broader approach to disarmament (and development) now encompassed repatriating refugees, reintegrating ex-combatants, and improving law and order by reforming the internal

⁸² United Nations General Assembly, "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them," (United Nations General Assembly, 1996).

⁸³ Emphasis added. United Nations General Assembly, "Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures," (United Nations General Assembly, 1996).

⁸⁴ "BASIC Paper 23," pg9.

⁸⁵ Kuhne (ed.), "Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures", pg138.

security forces.⁸⁶ Convincing donors of the need to include security and military-related projects in their socioeconomic development plan for Mali was no easy task. Many did not see the immediate correlation between under-development and insecurity, while others argued that guaranteeing security in Mali was the responsibility of the national government and should not be financed through international resources.⁸⁷ In fact, earlier attempts at DDR failed in 1993 due to lack of funds.⁸⁸ The UN's strategy now involved simultaneous action from the UN Development Programme (UNDP), international development agencies, and NGOs, who were addressing the causes of conflict and poverty, while being involved in various aspects of the DDR program. Soldiers were paid between US \$100 and \$200 to join cantonment camps and surrender their weapons.⁸⁹ In the end, the program demobilized around 12,000 ex-combatants, re-integrating 2,540 of them into various government and military jobs, while another 9,435 received vocational training and were offered UNDP Trust Fund grants to join individual or collective civil ventures.⁹⁰ In addition, President Konaré succeeded in convincing the military to destroy the collected weapons as a symbolic political act of reconciliation. He also initiated a West African initiative to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms in the sub-region, resulting in a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons.

The relative success of the Malian DDR experience radically impacted the discourse and practice of weapons collection programs, setting a new benchmark as to how practical disarmament could contribute to post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building. Hitherto, micro-disarmament was primarily a reactive strategy, focusing on

⁸⁶ Di Chiaro III and Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War* pg49.

⁸⁷ Ibid. pg58.

⁸⁸ Ibid. pg53.

⁸⁹ Ibid. pg59.

⁹⁰ "BASIC Paper 23," pg10.

reducing the supply of arms in circulation. The “proportional and integrated approach to development and security”, signaled a growing interest in addressing the demand-side factors of proliferation to prevent uncontrolled possession and use of guns. Many of the lessons learned in Mali were directly integrated into the project aims and objectives of subsequent attempts at disarmament. Decommissioning became an integral part of a whole series of activities, which collectively became known as post-conflict reconstruction and/or peacebuilding; these might include: demilitarization, the control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, the monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and social and economic development.⁹¹ Disarmament by command or Phase 1 programs especially became linked to other rehabilitation activities:

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process cannot be viewed as a simple sequence of events. Rather, these activities form a continuum whose elements overlap with one another, and are related and mutually reinforcing. The success of the process is dependent on the success of each of the steps.⁹²

By stressing the seamless nature of DDR, practitioners acknowledged the necessity of incorporating the security and economic needs of ex-combatants in order to persuade them to surrender their weapons permanently.⁹³ Nicola Koch, of the UN Dept of Peacekeeping Operations, Lessons Learned Unit went so far as to say:

...without demobilization, reintegration of ex-combatants and the economic development of civil society, *disarmament alone has no long-term benefits*...As an indivisible process, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration exercises

⁹¹ Boutros-Ghali, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace 1995," ppara. 47.

⁹² "Report of the Secretary-General on the role of United Nations peacekeeping in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration," (United Nations, 2000), ppara. 8.

⁹³ BGen. (ret'd) Ian C. Douglas, Col. (ret'd) Douglas Fraser, and Peggy Mason, "Practical Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Measures for Peacebuilding," (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 1997), pg44, Peggy Mason and Shannon Selin, "Consolidation of Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures: The Context," (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 1998), pg10.

have become an integral part of modern peacekeeping operations and subsequent post-conflict peacebuilding.⁹⁴

This is quite unlike some earlier rhetoric that micro-disarmament, in and of itself, could have a significant impact on the creation of a secure environment.⁹⁵

It appears that DDR has now evolved into a holy trinity. Some of the benefits cited:

They reduce the chances of renewed hostilities at the same level of violence and destruction; They help preclude the use in criminal activities of leftover military-style weapons and the social and economic disruption that can flow from such activities; They provide the basis for the re-establishment of confidence in social institutions, such as the judicial system and police, as well as a secure environment for peaceful interaction.

There are a few analysts however, who take a more nuanced stance on the importance of disarmament to post-conflict reconstruction. Bernd Hoffmann, Head of the Division for Emergency and Refugee Aid, GTZ Germany spoke frankly about his concerns:

For the governments of post-war societies, these (DDR) programs are a political instrument through which loyalties can be created and 'potential enemies' pacified. Donors place emphasis on harnessing the economic potentials of ex-combatants and on political neutralization of the individuals concerned.⁹⁶

In fact, the politicization of disarmament and DDR initiatives by different actors in the post-conflict process, and how this affects the role and desired outcomes of the programs is an area that has not been explored in academic literature to date.

⁹⁴ Emphasis added. Herbert Wulf (ed.), "Disarmament and Conflict Prevention in Development Cooperation," (Bonn, Germany: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 2000), pg27.

⁹⁵ Canada's submission to the Report of the Secretary-General on GA resolution A/51/45N stated that "...such an integrated approach has yet to be fully embraced in the context of the various disarmament forums of the United Nations". For the most part, it is the delegations with experience as either practitioners or recipients who support a development and disarmament strategy. United Nations General Assembly, "General and complete disarmament: consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures," (United Nations General Assembly, 1997), pgpara. 15.

⁹⁶ Wulf (ed.), "BICC Report 14," pg29.

Arguably, weapons collection programs, along with other post-conflict reconstruction activities, contribute indirectly to (a) desired abstract value(s) held by the international community. These may include civilization, peace, stability, law and order.⁹⁷ When compared and contrasted to descriptors of situations of conflict, especially in Africa, such as (new) barbarism, war, instability, lawlessness and disorder, a normative agenda¹ appears to guide the 'peacebuilding orthodoxy'. The emphasis on 'good governance', 'human rights', 'security sector reform', and 'DDR' amongst other post-conflict priorities, reveal a desire by the international actors to re-order or give order to state-society relations in countries 'plagued by conflict'. One German politician explained:

We must learn to see conversion policies as strategies for managing structural societal change which should be optimized...The link is clear and obvious: disarmament, conversion, and a favorable political and economic environment can contribute to the prevention of violent or deadly conflict and to post-conflict rehabilitation.⁹⁸

It could be asserted that reconstruction or rehabilitation has the intention of forming developing countries in the image of the developed world. Peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction since the early 1990s have been interpreted and understood to mean the development of Weberian states. State building has resulted in the construction of a particular kind of social order in response to the perception of a breakdown of social (dis)order or 'state failure'. The activities of post-conflict reconstruction, including practical disarmament, favour the creation of a strong state, with centralized power and the monopoly of the use of force, while assuming that initiatives such as security sector

⁹⁷ Di Chiaro III and Faltas, eds., *Managing the Remnants of War* pg216. These values are explored in greater depth in an earlier chapter on Post-conflict reconstruction and Conflict in Africa.

⁹⁸ Wulf (ed.), "BICC Report 14," pg45.

reform and elections will encourage the development of a benign, functioning, liberal-democracy.

Whether or not micro-disarmament does contribute significantly to those desired values and outcomes is debatable. Joseph Di Chiaro, co-editor of one of the only books on micro-disarmament, cautioned "I am also not convinced at this stage that we can merely identify weapons collection programs and destruction as measures necessary for insertion in peace agreements, peacekeeping mandates, and the like".⁹⁹ Implicitly, Di Chiaro appears to suggest other options for dealing with weapons are possible. Other scholars are more explicit arguing that in certain circumstances, arms control, not collection, may be more appropriate. Joanna Spear cautions that "the process of disarmament is rendered more complex by the integral role which weaponry has come to play in the society".¹⁰⁰ Understanding the pre-conflict socio-cultural role of the gun, for example as a symbol of masculinity, prestige, or as a form of currency to acquire a wife, land or livestock, will greatly improve the likelihood of any arms control or micro-disarmament initiative. This cultural sensitivity distinguishes between 'gun cultures', where the possession of firearms is widespread and accepted although use is controlled by traditional values, social norms and governmental legislation and 'cultures of violence', where weapons become a means of achieving objectives such as social standing, property and political power through non-peaceful methods.¹⁰¹ Spears argues that the main task of post-conflict peacebuilding is "to restore the (pre-conflict) rules and

⁹⁹ Kuhne (ed.), "Consolidating Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures", pg146.

¹⁰⁰ Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions," pg3.

¹⁰¹ Lodgaard (ed.), "Proceedings from the conference Practical Disarmament", pg29-30, Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions."

values which governed gun use".¹⁰² Depending on the needs and demands of the local population, voluntary disarmament with enforceable regulations regarding the limited possession of firearms may be more appropriate. Like many other pastoralist societies, "Small arms have always constituted in the psyche of Djiboutians a symbol of virility, richness and sometimes were used as a part of the dowry in the custom of marriage".¹⁰³ However, the Republic of Djibouti, only allows members of the various security forces, such as the Gendarmerie, the Police and Armed Forces, the right to bare arms at all times. Civilian possession is regulated by gun licenses and societal norms. "The normality of arms in Djiboutian society is such that, when an individual comes into the city or village to do their shopping, their guns are taken by officials and left in border zones around the urban area, until the individual has done their business and returns to collect their gun".¹⁰⁴ The Djibouti example demonstrates that innovative and culturally sensitive arms control measures could include restrictions on the types of firearms and ammunition allowed for civilian possession, limiting ownership to one gun per person, banning the concealment or public display of weapons and creating gun-free zones.¹⁰⁵ Other options include the legalization of illicit arms through community control of weapons formerly owned by individuals, for example, clan ownership in ethnic Somali areas, or the formation of government controlled militias.

Donors and disarmament pundits, largely because of a negative association between arms, insecurity and underdevelopment, have not explored these possibilities,

¹⁰² Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions," pg3.

¹⁰³ Assowe, "Djibouti: Small Arms Focal Points," pg2.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Major (Ret'd) David DeClerq, "The Role of Ammunition Controls in Addressing Excessive and Destabilizing Accumulations of Small Arms," (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, 1998), pg20-21.

due to their own normative interpretations of the worth of small arms and light weapons. Nevertheless, the challenge of peace-building is how to achieve the subjective state of 'feeling secure' by objective actions such as weapons collection programs and state building. It is conceivable that because of factors such as culture, objective realities (e.g. no police outpost exists nearby), and subjective interpretations (e.g. historical precedence, the state is unable or unwilling to fulfill its social responsibility of providing security to its citizens) that keeping weapons may be preferable to surrendering them to the state or another third party. Donors and practitioners need to accommodate these differing points of view in the planning and implementation of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities. No normative framework exists to guide donors on questions about who should have the right to bear arms (i.e. non-state actors, community-based security systems) and under what conditions (i.e. when the state is unable to provide security to its citizens, as part of arms control measures, etc.).¹⁰⁶ These issues were not directly addressed during the 2001 and 2006 UN Conferences on "Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects", avoiding the difficult questions surrounding when and why a gun is illegal.

Herein lies an important and potentially damaging tension between rhetoric and reality. The theory of peacebuilding may exclude the views of those who perceive a need and a right to possess arms in practice. These discussions will be fraught with disagreement, based both on ideology and culture. Parallels with the public health debate on firearms control in Western countries may point to important lessons where it is

¹⁰⁶ Wendy Cukier, "International Fire/Small Arms Control," *Canadian Foreign Policy*, 6, no. 1 (1998), "Gun Free Zones, a New Weapon in the War On Crime," *IRIN*, 26 May 2006, Spear, "The Disarmament and Demobilisation of Warring Factions," pg3.

argued that “the right (of Canadians) to security from violence needs to take priority over the claims of some to the right of individuals to bear arms”.¹⁰⁷

The peacebuilding strategy’s genesis is largely thanks to the Public Health and Crime Prevention perspectives. Arguments in crime prevention and public health literature based their logic on the “accessibility hypothesis”:

...that access to firearms increases the lethality of conflicts and may even precipitate some impulsive violent acts. Factors, such as the social and legislative environment which allow access to a gun, exert a significant influence on the frequency, distribution and growth of deaths and injuries due to firearms.¹⁰⁸

Phase III weapons collection programs and earlier examples of Phase II weapons buy-back initiatives were based on restricting accessibility. Besides the correlation between increased availability of arms and the lethality and scale of violence, peacebuilding literature has also suggested that the proliferation of weapons probably increases the likelihood of violations of international humanitarian law in conflict and post-conflict situations.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

In the post-Cold War era, multilateral donors and development practitioners have advocated a ‘peacebuilding orthodoxy’ based on a number of prescribed security and development-oriented interventions, to secure the transition from armed conflict to peace.

These state-centric activities include practical disarmament, Disarmament,

¹⁰⁷ Cukier, "International Fire/Small Arms Control," pg74.

¹⁰⁸ Wendy Cukier, Antoine Chapdelaine, and Cindy Collins, "Globalization and Firearms: A Public Health Perspective," (Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, 2000), pg7.

¹⁰⁹ Eric Berman and Robert Muggah, "Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons," (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2001), International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (Geneva: ICRC, 1999), International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and Violations of International Humanitarian Law and the Deterioration of the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," (Oslo: Norwegian Red Cross, 1998).

Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR). The aim of these activities is to return the monopoly of the use of force to a 'democratized' state, one directed by the principles of good governance.¹¹⁰ This chapter has argued that those who support the 'peacebuilding orthodoxy' believe that re-enforcing the state is the best means of ensuring the human security of citizens. These prescriptive ideas are problematic, for in fragile, failing, or failed states, individual and community interests often may be at odds with those of the state or the state may not have the capacity to ensure the security of its citizens.¹¹¹

Users of small arms and light weapons have a variety of reasons for possessing and using their weapons. These demand factors may include: a trouble history of inter-communal or state-society conflict, cultural norms, objective realities (lack of functioning state security institutions), and subjective interpretations (e.g. the state is predatory, or not interested in fulfilling its social contract of providing security). For these reasons keeping weapons may be preferable to surrendering them to the state and/or a third party. As is, the current literature and advocacy agenda does not discuss when and for whom it is appropriate to have the right to bear arms. Nor does it debate the legitimate versus illegitimate purposes of small arms possession.¹¹² Recent academic and advocacy literature strongly encourages the disarming of civilians and ancillary military forces. They suggest that, "micro-disarmament is not only a *process* of collecting weapons but also a *broader political tool* to provide a certain amount of stability and to sustain the

¹¹⁰ Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, "Security Sector Reform: Bringing the private in," *Conflict, Development and Security*, 6, no. 1 (2006).

¹¹¹ Anders Jagerskog, "Applying the Human Security Concept," *Conflict, Development and Security*, 4, no. 3 (2004),

¹¹² Cukiér, "International Fire/Small Arms Control," pg86.

peace process".¹¹³ Earlier attitudes, largely before the success of the 'proportional and integrated' approach in Mali, regarded weapons collection programs above all as disarmament with some consideration of developmental elements.¹¹⁴ A more holistic approach certainly has led to widening objectives, changes in implementation and greater claims of utility for the weapons collection programs. Although this chapter questions the extent to which current conceptions of practical disarmament have addressed the demand side of small arms possession and use.

¹¹³ Stefan Brem and Antonino Geraci, "Third-Party Intervention in War-Torn Societies: How Effective Are Micro-Disarmament Programs? (revised)" (paper presented at the 41st Annual ISA Convention, Los Angeles, CA, 14-18 March 2000), pg36.

¹¹⁴ These attitudes will be examined in greater depth in a later chapter in the case study on Uganda.

Part Two

The Karamoja Case Study

Part Two

The Karamoja Case Study

Chapter 4:

Enduring Legacies:

Disarmament and the Sources of Conflict between the British and the Karamojong

1888 - 1961

Chapter 4: Enduring Legacies: Disarmament and the Sources of Conflict between the British and the Karamojong 1888-1961

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the way of life and thinking of the pastoralists of North-Eastern Uganda. Pastoralism is a cultural adjustment to semi-arid conditions where livestock offers the most rational form of economic activity. The frequency of drought and limited annual rainfall encouraged a semi-nomadic existence in order to cope with the periodic scarcity of natural resources such as water and pasture land. In the latter part of the 19th century, the Karamojong encountered the British and other non-Karamojong. This interaction, especially with the colonial administration would set a pattern of relations, the legacy of which is still prevalent today. Through the exploration of several key concepts, such as territory, authority, modes of production, development and conservation, a relationship of conflicting values and goals between the state and pastoralists will be demonstrated. Disarmament efforts have consistently not only been a function, but also a symbol of this complex struggle of wills.

This chapter seeks to introduce the reader to the case study of Karamoja, Uganda. It argues that the state-society problems observed in contemporary times have their root in the colonial British era. Many of the political and economic challenges that the pastoralists face today can be traced to their earliest interactions with the nascent Ugandan Protectorate. During the colonial period, the north-eastern area was perceived by the administrators as a problematic and lawless area; thus it was administered with the aim to control the pastoralists, but not to develop their socio-economic welfare. The various conflicts between the two parties have led the Karamojong to conclude that they live in a self-help situation, in which small arms and light weapons are a coping mechanism. This chapter argues that many of the contemporary concerns in Karamoja, such as raiding and firearms proliferation were as

prescient and problematic then as they are today. As global weaponry technology quickly evolved, the British response in East Africa was aimed at controlling the supply of firearms in indigenous hands at the sub-regional level and restoring administrative and territorial control in Karamoja. However ever since their appearance in the late 19th century, the British and subsequent post-colonial governments have failed to appreciate that the demand for small arms and their usage are symbolic of the survival challenges facing Karamojong societies.

The Environment and Peoples of Karamoja

The Karamoja sub-region lies in present day North-Eastern Uganda bordering the Sudan to the North, Kenya to the East, and several Ugandan districts to the West. Karamoja covers a semi-arid area of 27,000 km², approximately the size of Belgium. Currently, it is divided into three administrative districts, Moroto, Kotido and Nakapiripirit; the districts are further divided into counties, which roughly correspond to the main clans of the Karamojong tribe: Dodoth, Jie, Labwor, Bokora, Matheniko, Pian, and Chekwii. Approximately 700,000 people live in the sub-region and share a similar language and lifestyle.¹

At present, the majority of communities lead an agro-pastoralist lifestyle, although the degree to which the various tribes practise pastoralism varies. The Labwor, for example, enjoy fertile land and more regular rainfall, practise agriculture to a much greater degree than the Suk/Pokot, who are entirely nomadic. The vast majority of the tribes of the Karamoja region practise transhumance, a form of semi-nomadism, where during the dry season (which lasts from October to March) families migrate long distances with the cattle to camps called kraals, in search of water and pasture. The Karamojong tribes generally engage in some basic subsistence agriculture of crops such as millet and sorghum, however, the main focus of their spiritual, economic and social life revolves around the breeding and keeping of cattle.

¹ Karamoja Data Centre, "Kotido District Information Guide," (Kampala: Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Uganda, 2003), Karamoja Data Centre, "Moroto District Information Guide," (Kampala: Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Uganda, 2003).

This particular way of life of the Karamojong tribes created conflict with past governments, whose attempts to create permanent settlements and “civilize” their communities have been resisted. Beginning with the British colonial administration in the late 19th century, state policies towards the pastoralists have varied from neglect and containment; closing the sub-region to other districts in Uganda and Kenya; and the forced “modernization” that involved reducing the level cattle stock and replacing it with the introduction of agriculture primarily cash crops.

Generally, the levels of conflict in the region have been three-fold: Firstly, intra-tribal between the various major clans such as the Bokora, Matheniko, Dodoth and Jie; secondly, inter-tribal with their neighbours in Uganda (the Acholi, Sabiny, Langi and Itesot), and with other pastoralist tribes in neighbouring countries such as the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya and the Toposi and Didinga of Sudan; and thirdly, conflict with the state, when representatives of the state such as the armed forces or police are forced to implement government policy such as disarmament programs or forced labour. The conflicts in the Karamoja sub-region are widely misunderstood; the violence is generally not politically motivated and targeted towards the state, such as rebel groups, which include the Lakwena Movement or the Lord’s Resistance Army (a rebel movement active in Northern Uganda). Nor is the violence sustained, but rather it seems to pursue a pattern of large sporadic clashes, mostly between clans or against neighbours, followed by an overwhelming and disproportionate use of force by the state to calm the crisis situation down.

Initial Contact between the Karamojong and non-Karamojong

The British first became acquainted with the Karamojong in 1898, when Maj. J.R.L. Macdonald led a relief expedition into Karamojong territory, in an effort to reach the Nile and British troops in the Sudan. After this initial contact, where the British bartered with the local

tribesmen for pack animals and food,² Macdonald described the Karamojong impressively as 'the best fighters in Equatoria'.³ They in turn called the Major *Apolokin Lorot*, 'he who has made a long journey and has grown in status along the way'.⁴ As the territory inhabited by the Karamojong was well outside of the administered area of the Uganda Protectorate, Macdonald suggested establishing a permanent military patrol of the region to prevent incursions by unprincipled traders and adventure-seekers. In a report to London, he stated:

Commercially the country...offers many opportunities for traders and is not only rich in ivory, but contains immense quantities of livestock of all kinds and considerable agricultural resources...Trade will increase whether or not we control the country, but friendly relations can only be maintained by some such control.⁵

Macdonald's request was rejected by Lord Salisbury on the principle that the expenditure of a colonial territory should be offset by its income. Thus the Foreign Secretary replied "It would be impossible to undertake any further responsibilities on the Uganda frontier of a costly character".⁶ Although Macdonald signed treaties with local elders to the effect that the 'British subjects had free access, with trading and building rights, to all parts of the tribe's territory',⁷ another fifteen years would pass before renewed official contact between the British administration and the Karamojong tribes would occur. In the mean time, a steady flow of armed trading caravans, including Abyssinians, Americans, Arabs, British, Greeks, Persian and Swahili hunters, entered Karamoja in search of slaves and/or ivory.⁸

² Fr. Mario Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" (Postgraduate Diploma Thesis, University of Wales, Swansea, 1979) pg62.

³ James Barber, "The Karamoja District of Uganda: A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," *Journal of African History*, 3, no. 1 (1962): pg111, C.P. Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict: A Study of Karamoja District, 1897-1968" (Master of Arts Thesis, University of East Africa, 1969) pg46.

⁴ Macdonald's entourage was referred to as 'the walkers' or 'the people on the way'. Augusto Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects* (Bologna, Italy: EMI, 1982) pg55.

⁵ James Barber, *Imperial Frontier: A study of relations between the British and the Pastoral Tribes of North East Uganda* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House, 1968) pg12.

⁶ Salisbury was severely critiqued by the media and even members of his own government for the heavy expenditures already committed to the Uganda Protectorate. Thus a policy of administrative expansion in East Africa was limited to the essential requirements of security of the existing empire. Ibid. pg14, 15-16.

⁷ The tribal leaders also agreed not to cede any territory to, or enter any agreement with, a foreign power without British consent. Any disputes between the two parties, would be settled by a British representative. Ibid. pg11.

⁸ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg46. Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg112.

Sir Harry Johnston, Special Commissioner in Uganda, reported to London by November 1899 that “The Europeans are coming in increasing numbers to shoot elephants and to trade ivory with the natives”.⁹ He expressed some concern that their conduct might lead to anti-Caucasian sentiment amongst the locals unless their activities were controlled. Less than a year later, Johnston wrote to Salisbury “I am also proposing to place a garrison of regular troops on some suitable site to the north of Mount Elgon to *overawe* and possibly disperse a colony of slave-trading Arabs, who are gradually beginning to settle in some numbers in that direction”.¹⁰ In effect, the Commissioner was reiterating the advice of Macdonald’s previous expedition to Karamoja. However, Johnston’s policy was perceived to be expansionist by the Foreign Office, which advocated a consolidation of administrative control in existing colonial territories in East Africa to make them profitable. Colonel James Hayes Sadler, the new Commissioner in Uganda was dispatched with the following instructions:

...in the opinion of His Majesty’s Government, it is not desirable to push too quickly amongst the tribes in outlying districts who have little to offer at present in the way of commerce and who have not yet become accustomed to the sojourn of the white man in their midst. Such tribes should rather be attracted to larger centres where they will see the work of civilization in progress and begin to appreciate its advantages.¹¹

Nonetheless, in 1904 Sadler repeated Johnston’s request to send a company of troops to Karamoja to establish a permanent administrative post, with the eventual addition of a civil officer.¹² For the third time, London thwarted the recommendations of the local authorities. However, Sadler was provided with two accounts of great significance, which greatly disturbed him. The first came in 1903 when William Grant, who had been sent to investigate reports that Arab and Swahili caravans were trading firearms and ammunition with local tribesmen. He confirmed that inter-tribal conflict was rife and that gun-running was

⁹ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg22.

¹⁰ Italics added. Ibid. pg25.

¹¹ Ibid. pg34.

¹² Ibid. pg39.

prevalent, but not wide-spread, which resulted in the arrest of some traders.¹³ Later, a dispatch from Kakunguru, a Muganda Chief friendly with the Entebbe administration, depicted a territory increasingly controlled by armed Abyssinian expeditions. During these early years of 'British rule', administrators in Entebbe mainly depended on returning traders and hunters, or the occasional report from a touring colonial officer, for information from the area north of Mount Elgon

In an effort to control the growing trade in ivory, and gain some benefit, the colonial officials enacted the 'Outlying Districts Ordinance', which required traders to obtain passes to enter unadministrated areas, as well as restricting the permitted firearms for each caravan.¹⁴ A government post was established at Mbale, however it appears that the restrictions on elephant hunting were scarcely enforced. By 1909, the revenue collected from the government ivory tax accounted for 10% of Uganda's total exports.¹⁵ 'Karamoja' Bell, one of the earliest and the most famous elephant hunters of the time, alone exported £10,000 worth of ivory during two journeys between 1903 and 1906.¹⁶ When Bell arrived in Karamoja at the beginning of the century, he reportedly exclaimed "...we could hardly believe our eyes...the whole area was black with them".¹⁷ Scarcely ten years later, the elephant population was decimated.¹⁸

The annual report from Sadler and the Uganda Protectorate in 1904-5, sums up the official attitude towards the north-east:

The policy of the Administration is rather to avoid conflict with the wilder tribes...and trust to the principle of our rule becoming known to them through the

¹³ Grant suggested the establishment of a government station in Karamoja, which was then forwarded on to London by Sadler in 1904. Ibid. pg40, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg48.

¹⁴ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg41.

¹⁵ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg48.

¹⁶ W.D.M. Bell, *Karamoja Safari*, 2nd ed. (Suffolk, UK: Neville Spearman Ltd, 1984) pg90.

¹⁷ Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects* pg40.

¹⁸ R.W. Beachey, "The East African Ivory Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History*, 8, no. 2 (1968), Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg65, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg48.

intervening tribes until such a time as the permanent occupation of their country becomes a necessity.¹⁹

In effect, the exploitation of ivory from Karamoja was hugely profitable for the Protectorate's coffers and cost Entebbe little in the way of manpower and financial resources. At this stage there was little interest in governing the outlying areas, so long as the raiding activity remained in pastoralist areas.

The Consolidation of British Imperialism in Karamoja

Karamoja became a source of concern to the colonial administration in 1910, due to increasing evidence of Abyssinian encroachment into 'British Territory' by traders. It had been known for some time that expeditions from the north were active in Karamoja, trading firearms for ivory. However, concern about the proliferation and distribution of these weapons came to a head in July 1910, when the District Commissioner of Nimule reported large numbers of illegal Abyssinian firearms were being smuggled into other neighbouring districts in northern Uganda via Karamoja.²⁰ As a result of this report and complaints from the Governor of British East Africa of cross-border raiding between the Suk (Pokot) and the Karamojong tribe, the Uganda Government sent two patrols into the Karamoja region to investigate the claims of arms trafficking and disruptive tribal clashes. The officers, District Superintendent of Police P.S.H. Tanner and T. Grant, an administrative officer, returned to Entebbe with disturbing accounts of armed lawlessness and a substantial Ethiopian gun-running trade based around Tshudi Tshudi (present day Kaabong). Tanner reported that "the whole country was in an extremely lawless state, where raiding, looting and killing among the tribes was a very ordinary occurrence and there was no doubt that the natives had

¹⁹ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg43.

²⁰ James Barber, "The Moving Frontier of British Imperialism in Northern Uganda 1898-1919," *Uganda Journal*, 29, no. 1 (1965): pg34.

possession of, and were able to obtain rifles and ammunition, which greatly increased the death rate amongst them".²¹

By disguising his patrol as a trading caravan, Tanner encountered first-hand the unexpected levels of armament in the area and its effects. While based at Manimani, the local Bokora tribe were raided by the Jie aided by the Kamchuro and some Swahili traders, resulting in the deaths of 40 members of the local community. Tanner observed that the Bokora were only armed with the traditional spear, whilst the raiders were armed with rifles. Later, while investigating in Jie County, he happened upon a manyatta, which contained an estimated 50-60 Gras rifles.²² The Superintendent of Police ended his patrol by arresting members of Abyssinian and Swahili caravans with the illegal possession of firearms, confiscating their contraband and ivory. What Tanner witnessed is what social anthropologists, such as Fr. J.P. Crazzolora and John Lamphear, described as the consolidation of a nascent feudal Jie state.²³ Under the hereditary war-leader Loriang, the Jie tribe was attempting to strengthen their power and influence over neighbouring Karamojong tribes with the assistance of the Acholi. Loriang had instituted innovative changes in Jie military organization and tactics, such as introducing a system of battalions based on territorial divisions.²⁴ The creation of a cohesive Jie army, rather than an ad hoc patchwork of groups of warriors proved highly successful against the Acholi in the battle of Caicaon, which involved thousands of men.²⁵

There is no doubt that the formation of militarily strong political structures in Karamoja would have been of concern to the colonial authorities in Entebbe. However it

²¹ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg108.

²² A manyatta is a large family dwelling. James Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," *Uganda Journal*, 28, no. 1 (1964): pg17.

²³ Charles Emunyu Ocan, "Pastoralism and Crisis in North-Eastern Uganda: Factors that have determined social change in Karamoja," (Kampala: Centre for Basic Research, 1992), pg26.

²⁴ J.E. Lamphear and J.B Webster, "The Jie-Acholi War: Oral Evidence from Two Sides of the Battle Front," *Uganda Journal*, 35, no. 1 (1971): pg24.

²⁵ The battle occurred some time between 1898-1901 in western Jie territory. The subsequent peace marked the beginning of an alliance between the tribes, in which Acholi riflemen joined the Jie military campaigns in large numbers. Ibid.: pg29-30.

appears that the administrators simply regarded the tribes of Karamojong as primitive, backward natives, devoid of any political sophistication. Regardless, the reports of the patrols led by Tanner and Grant painted a picture of a lawless area inhabited by increasingly armed natives, where Abyssinian traders were not only trading arms for ivory, but in some cases participating in raiding activities. As a result, the Karamoja region was declared a 'closed zone under military restriction' on July 4th, 1911.²⁶ Although the population of the Karamojong was limited, the quantity and quality of arms involved were of significant concern to the British. Tanner reported that the Kamchuro tribe in the west had about 2000 rifles, and the Dodoth and Jie tribes were similarly well-armed.²⁷ The Karamojong in the south, such as the Matheniko and the Bokora had comparatively fewer rifles, but were beginning to buy from the traders. Regular expeditions from Abyssinian were entering 'British territory' unencumbered every 3 or 4 months loaded with approximately 120 rifles and 3000-4000 rounds of ammunition per safari.²⁸ Large numbers of firearms and increasing trade in weapons had also been observed by the District Commissioner of Nimule in July 1910, and in two subsequent reports:

During our tour in the central Acholi unadministered area I personally saw some 500 firearms a large number of which being Gras rifles. It is possible that the chiefs possess a further 1,200 or so that I have not seen...Relying on their rifles the Acholi war parties numbering sometimes 2,000-3,000 strong have created a reign of terror in the country to the east. In November one raiding party reached the East African Protectorate boundary, north of Elgon, incidentally bringing back Rinderpest into this province with the captured cattle.²⁹

In addition, the arms trade in East Africa continued to thrive as a result of technological advances in firearms production in Europe and large tracts of land and coastline left unpatrolled by colonial governments. By the late nineteenth century, Muzzle-loaders (muskets) were being replaced by breech-loader rifles, only to be substituted quickly

²⁶ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg67.

²⁷ Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," pg21. Lamphear contradicts colonial reports that the Jie were armed. Stating "Loriang did not buy guns from the traders. He did not want them. His men fought with spears. The only men in his army were those Acholi who came to join him after Caicaon." Lamphear and Webster, "The Jie-Acholi War," pg31.

²⁸ Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," pg19.

²⁹ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg108.

thereafter by repeating or magazine rifles.³⁰ With each subsequent technological development in types of firearms, large supplies of obsolete weapons from Europe flooded into the East African market. By 1888, the British Consul-General of Zanzibar, Euan-Smith, estimated that between 80,000-100,000 firearms were passing through ports in East Africa annually to be trafficked elsewhere on the continent.³¹ Demand amongst the Arab and African population was fuelled by the prestige of the new weapons, providing an element of surprise and advantage in conflicts otherwise fought with traditional weapons such as fighting sticks, wrist knives, finger knives, bow and arrow, spears and shields fabricated from animal hides.³² The breech-loader type firearms, such as the Gras rifle, were considered much more reliable and precise weapons compared to the flintlock or percussion muskets, which were noisy, but had a bad reputation of malfunctioning.

The level and quality of armament amongst indigenous populations caused serious consternation amongst colonial officials in both the Entebbe region and at the sub-regional level. The British Consul-General of Zanzibar, in his 1888 report, cautioned:

Unless some steps are taken to check this immense import of arms into East Africa the development and pacification of this great continent will have to be carried out in the face of an enormous population, the majority of whom will probably be armed with first-class breech-loading rifles.³³

After the 1910 patrols in the Karamoja region, Euan-Smith's sentiments were echoed by administrators in Uganda. They realized that the strategic situation required a revision of their northern policy beyond the previous cost-benefit analysis of whether governance of the north would generate local revenue and exportable goods worthy of the expense. In 1911 the Provincial Commissioner of the Northern Province, F.C. Knowles, urged:

The matter is of the utmost importance as there is little doubt that in the near future a considerable force will be necessary to deal with the natives when they gain confidence in the use of their weapons, as the number of breech loaders in their

³⁰ R.W. Beachey, "The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History*, 3, no. 3 (1962): pg452.

³¹ *Ibid.*: pg453.

³² Lamphear and Webster, "The Jie-Acholi War," pg25.

³³ Beachey, "The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century," pg453.

possession, I am informed, already far exceeds, by some hundreds, those of our police and there is no doubt that more will come in, and the position becomes more dangerous every day, unless prompt measures are taken to deal with the situation at once.³⁴

The British response both at the local and sub-regional level was aimed at controlling the supply of firearms coming into the hands of the indigenous people and restoring administrative and territorial control. However there was little attempt to address, what today we would call the demand factors of the arms trade. By November 1888, the British spearheaded efforts to control the import of weapons first by introducing a blockage of arms and ammunition on the coast of the Horn of Africa. However, the line of defence was poorly enforced by the Italians in Somali waters, and the smuggling simply shifted to southern waters and smaller vessels. Moreover the blockade discouraged the exportation of ivory and proved rather expensive.³⁵ Scarcely a year later the blockade was abandoned for arms control initiatives. Restrictions were placed on the importation of breech-loaders, and their possession was restricted to Europeans only or “those who were under European supervision”.³⁶ These measures were then replaced by the Brussels Treaty of 1890, which severely restricted the importation of weapons and ammunition across Africa to government control. Horizontal proliferation was then to be stemmed by the registering and licensing of guns, such as the institution of a gun-tax in Uganda in 1900.³⁷ The Brussels Treaty attempted to induce cooperation amongst imperial powers by encouraging the exchange of intelligence and intercepting trans-border gunrunning. Due to competing imperial interests, this international agreement was also poorly enforced. Contraband firearms and ammunition continued to flow into northern Uganda via French Somaliland (Djibouti) and Habaci traders, as the French armed the Abyssinian Emperor Menelik against their colonial rivals, the Italians.³⁸

³⁴ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg109.

³⁵ Beachey, "The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century," pg456.

³⁶ Ibid.: pg457.

³⁷ Ibid.: pg461.

³⁸ Ibid.: pg462.

At the local level, already at the beginning of the century the British had declared Karamoja a 'closed' district, in which only licensed traders were permitted to operate. Selling firearms to local tribesmen was prohibited.³⁹ However, the lack of resources committed to the district ensured that this was only a theoretical obstacle. As demonstrated by Tanner and Grant's reports, not only was the proliferation of firearms the Karamojong already well underway, but it also appeared that the British had lost control of a territory that they did not occupy. The presence of Abyssinian expeditions attempting to establish permanent trading posts as encountered by Tanner caused a minor diplomatic row about the 1907 demarcation of the Ugandan-Abyssinian border. Several months after the return of the patrols, the British launched a formal complaint in Addis Ababa, but the Ethiopian Council of Ministers replied that "...no one knew where the red line on the map was on the ground; that the country had never been British and that there were no British officers ever seen there; that Abyssinia could not give up country which she had held without dispute for fifteen years".⁴⁰ Despite hesitations from the then British Secretary of State, Lord Harcourt, that "...it would be dangerous and unremunerative for the government of Uganda to undertake the administration of a country which is not of easy access from headquarters and which has no great natural resources...",⁴¹ the local colonial officials managed to convince London that under the circumstances a limited presence was necessary. Thus a police patrol of 31 men was dispatched to the Rudolf area with the instructions that "There would be no attempt whatever to commence administration, nor in any way to interfere with the tribes, save in so far as is necessary to prevent them obtaining ammunition or illicitly obtaining or exporting ivory".⁴²

With greater resources at his disposal than previous administrators, the new Governor of the Protectorate of Uganda, Frederick Jackson endorsed a policy reversal by approving a

³⁹ Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," pg15.

⁴⁰ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg114.

⁴¹ Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," pg16.

⁴² Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg112, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg53.

military and administrative expansion into the north which effectively cancelled all trading and hunting licences and effectively sealed off the Karamoja region.⁴³ Jackson said:

I consider as deplorable the conditions of affairs now existing in these parts (North of Elgon)...It cannot be pleaded that it was unknown that such a condition existed, nor is it possible to support the assertion that the traders were confining themselves to a war of extermination against the elephant...many of the traders were stirring up strife amongst the natives and assisting one tribe against another in order to share the loot...No efforts were made to stop such a class of traders from entering the country. On the contrary they were allowed to do so and receive permits at Jinja and Mbale, the inference being that so long as a considerable revenue was derived from the illicitly obtained ivory, it was no one's business to stop it.⁴⁴

Jackson also established a regular patrol of the area between Lake Rudolf and the Nile by a company of the King's African Rifles (KAR), soldiers who mostly came from agriculturalist societies such as the Acholi.⁴⁵ The aims of this Northern Garrison, as they later became known, were the "a) Opening up of that portion of the Protectorate with a view to future administration; b) The prevention of inter-tribal raids and feuds; c) The stopping of gun running and illicit trading".⁴⁶ J.P. Barber, one of the few historians researching this period of Karamoja tribal history, and himself a former colonial administrator in the region, describes the KAR as sweeping "...across the north of Uganda from the Nile, *pacifying* the tribes which were found to have rifles or offered resistance".⁴⁷ In his writings, Barber appears to be an apologist for the colonial administration of Karamoja, especially the early policies which he felt was the best possible strategy given the government's limited resources and manpower. In his last publication, *Imperial Frontier*, Barber concedes that Jackson's "policy initiative, at least in the north-east, was for greater control not development".⁴⁸ He is uncritical of the assumptions underlying the British strategy of law and order, assuming it was effective. Not only did the colonial administrators view the Karamojong as primitive and dangerous, which required external political intervention to tame them by introducing law

⁴³ By 1911, the revenue from the export of Ugandan cotton crops had significantly increased the budget of the Protectorate government. Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg116.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pg117.

⁴⁵ Charles Harrison, "Tribal system was developed under British rule," *The Times*, 29 July 1985, pgLexus Nexus.

⁴⁶ Barber, "The Moving Frontier," pg35.

⁴⁷ Italics are my own. Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg112.

⁴⁸ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg118.

and order, but there was little understanding in their midst of a pastoralist lifestyle or empathy of the difficulties the Karamojong tribesmen were facing.

The development of a nascent Jie feudal state was a result of a series of battles with neighbouring tribes and drastically altered the political Karamojong landscape. Colonial bureaucrats at the time failed to appreciate the political nature of the inter-tribal conflicts, instead describing them in anarchical terms. The brutality that the touring officers observed can be alternatively described as a struggle for survival. Lamphear in his article on the Jie-Acholi war noted “The diseases, famines, and defeats which the Jie had suffered before Caicaon had doubtlessly left them in a desperate state. Undoubtedly the Jie saw the Acholi attack as a threat to their very existence as an independent group.”⁴⁹ It seems plausible that other tribes of Karamojong origin felt similarly threatened when faced with the Jie expansion.⁵⁰ The various tribes had suffered in the 1890’s from a series of cattle diseases, droughts and locusts epidemics that caused the decimation of herds, crop failures and famines. In particular, the rinderpest outbreak of 1894-1896, killed off great a quantity of the cattle stock of the region.⁵¹ Even fifteen years later, both Tanner and Grant make reference to a serious cattle disease that had wiped out between 50-80% of the stock.⁵² This caused significant hardship for the pastoralist communities, who depended greatly on their cattle as a source of nourishment and subsistence. Without external assistance, the Karamojong were left to devise their own coping mechanisms. A Jie elder explains various short term strategies, “After Lopid killed almost all the cattle, a few people managed to live off their sheep and goats while others hunted in the bush; others went to Acholi and other places to beg food from their friends and kinsmen.”⁵³ Longer-term strategies, in the decades, which followed, included restocking the herds by raiding neighbouring tribes and trading with Swahili and

⁴⁹ Lamphear and Webster, "The Jie-Acholi War," pg30.

⁵⁰ This is largely linked to environmental scarcity and concepts of territory, which will be treated in greater depth later in this chapter.

⁵¹ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg60.

⁵² Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," pg22.

⁵³ J.E. Lamphear, *The Traditional History of the Jie of Uganda* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) pg224.

Abyssinian hunting expeditions. Thus not only were the Karamojong obtaining firearms, as correctly observed by the British, but they were also trading ivory for cattle.⁵⁴ Strategically, the acquisition of arms by the various tribes was necessitated by the superior firepower already possessed by the neighbouring Turkana. This tribe residing to the east, in what was then the East African Protectorate (Kenya), "had long since been armed by virtue of their longer contacts with Somali and Ethiopian caravans" and was successfully raiding their Karamojong neighbours.⁵⁵ As a result, an arms race occurred amongst the pastoralists at the beginning of the twentieth century, the various tribes competing to retain access to resources and cattle.⁵⁶ The closure of the district to outside trade and increasing intervention by British administrators would leave a significant impact on the society and environment of Karamoja, still evident today.

The Colonial Experience: Sources of Conflict

A new level of interaction between the outlying districts and the administrative centre characterized the period 1911-1921. The pattern of interaction between the state and the pastoralists during this time would set a pattern for poor contemporary state-society relations. A desire for greater control of the northern country led the Uganda Protectorate Government to extend its authority into Karamojong territory through military administration. Civilian governance, by a District Commissioner and Assistant District Commissioner, did not begin in the district until 1921. And it would be another fourteen years before additional officers were sent to assist with this substantial task.⁵⁷ Although at times during the period of formal British colonial administration (1911-1962) there were significant policy debates regarding the development and governance of Karamoja, a dominant discourse emerged and was implemented during this time. Primarily, the Uganda Protectorate Government was

⁵⁴ Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg112, Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg65.

⁵⁵ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg47.

⁵⁶ Lamphear suggests that conflicts over cattle and grazing land began in earnest in the 1870s and trade for guns began in the 1880s. Charles Emunyu Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda: The Changing Significance of Cattle Raids," (Kampala, Uganda: Centre for Basic Research, 1992), pg5.

⁵⁷ Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg121.

preoccupied with establishing their territorial claims over the area based on treaties signed by Macdonald with local tribesmen in 1898. Their aim was to pacify the local subjects, by creating and maintaining law and order, eventually to make the country governable. In relation to other areas of Uganda, the British consistently did not prioritize the Karamoja region for development efforts; it appeared to them that other areas mostly to the south and west would be easier and better investments of their resources. Hesketh Bell, the Commissioner of Uganda, visited northern Uganda in 1906, describing it as a country "with little or no promise of successful development in which he could not think of a single product that might be grown...which would pay for the cost of its carriage to the seaboard." He felt that the limited resources of the Protectorate should not be wasted "on inadequate efforts in outlying Provinces, but concentrated in the more favoured localities, where the soil is excellent, the people industrious and the country full of promise".⁵⁸ Largely, this attitude stemmed from a particular understanding of economic development, which was agricultural based and dismissed the potential of pastoralism. On the other hand, the majority of Karamojong tribe, even today after having been introduced to other lifestyles, prefer to practise agro-pastoralism, seeking to maximize their cattle assets for the greatest number of their kin.

Conflict between the two parties, the Ugandan protectorate and the Karamojong, developed and intensified as each attempted to achieve their goals. The state relied on the establishment of boundaries, laws, police patrols and prisons to discipline and pacify the pastoralists in order to limit their effect on neighbouring districts. Whilst the Karamojong tribe/people continued to raid cattle and move their stock about to maximize water and pasture resources. Fundamentally, the values and goals of the two civilizations were at odds. Thus in order to govern Karamoja, the Protectorate state had to implement and introduce several concepts that were foreign to the pastoralists. These concepts became important

⁵⁸ Barber, "The Moving Frontier," pg31.

sources of conflict between the two parties; they include: a centralized notion of authority; static conception of territory; sedentary lifestyle; 'Western' experience of development; conservation and restrictive coping mechanisms, and disarmament.⁵⁹ Each will be analyzed dealt with in turn, and is significant to gaining a better understanding of the impact of small arms in the region.

Sources of Conflict: A Centralized Notion of Authority

While pastoralist societies are not homogeneous, they share several distinguishing characteristics: a preference and reliance on stock keeping as their primary mode of production, the absence of a well-developed state and few society-wide institutions. The Karamojong tribe/peoples are no different. Their socio-political system is closely linked to their dependency on cattle. In contrast to the socio-political system that was imposed by Entebbe, Karamojong society has no formal political offices or posts where a single person can impose their individual will on the majority.⁶⁰ Thus, the Karamojong people did not have a history of kings and chiefs, unlike other tribes such as the Baganda, or the pastoralists from Anakole. On the contrary, the Karamojong system of authority emphasizes an individual's qualities as a pastoralist, for example good skills as a herder or a raider, and not his family background.⁶¹ The political institutions in existence are based on a corporate and communal nature, in the form of the generation-set. All initiated adult males belong to one of two groups in the generation-set, the elders or the warriors. Important decisions, such as political alliances or large-scale raids are made by the elder generation-set and implemented by the junior age-sets.⁶² The elders, rarely meet to take decisions involving the whole tribe, as a

⁵⁹ It should be noted that as can be expected the Karamojong society has undergone a profound social and political transformation since coming into regular contact with non-Karamojong peoples. Modern interpretations of these concepts and generally how Karamojong society is today will be dealt with in the next chapter on post-independence Karamoja.

⁶⁰ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg31.

⁶¹ Bell, *Karamoja Safari* pg126,94.

⁶² Each generation set is divided into five age-sets, with each sub-section given a name. This social institution is described in much greater detail by Bruno Novelli, *Aspects of Karimojong Ethnosociology*, vol. 44, *Museum Combonianum* (Verona, Italy: Novastampa, 1988) pgChapter 2. Neville Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) pgChapter 5.

single organ of government authority; rather power is devolved to elders of different localities.⁶³ It should be stressed that the Karamojong socio-political system is not territorially based, but rather relies on the community's relation to cattle and other stock. For example, warriors who have migrated with their cattle would owe their allegiance to decisions taken by the elders in the immediate vicinity, not necessarily to their own clan's elders.⁶⁴ The logic that exists is to protect your direct interests by co-operation with those with whom you share resources.

As a result of an egalitarian ethic in pastoral societies, where there is a high degree of equality that characterizes inter-personal relations (but not necessarily gender roles), there are few laws in Karamojong society and even fewer instances of mandatory coercion.⁶⁴ Where social laws have been transgressed, such as stealing, adultery, beating one's mother or father, a tribunal comprised of elders (men or women, depending on the sex of the accused) is convened to quickly resolve the dispute. Restitution and atonement, by the sacrifice of an ox or a goat, and a public thrashing is usually the order of the day.⁶⁵ There is little delay in the meting out of justice, or reliance on investigations or the interviewing of witnesses etc. Laws are not written, or dictated from above, rather, they rely on social customs that are considered norms in society. Literally, what binds Karamojong society together is the agreement and desire by all that the acquisition, possession and maintenance of cattle is in the best interest of every member of society. Although decisions are based upon a high degree of consensus, individual members of society show a great deal of independence in thought and action and are willing to take personal risks. For example, the leader of a herd will decide when it is time and where to migrate his herd.

Although Entebbe was aware that the Karamojong had no history of chiefs, for the purposes of administration, the officers attempting to establish military rule over Karamoja

⁶³ Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects* pg93.

⁶⁴ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg30.

⁶⁵ Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects* pg101.

decided to appoint chiefs and sub-chiefs for each territorial section.⁶⁶ It appears that Tufnell, the administrative officer, chose the chiefs according to their local reputation; most “were elders in the lineage structure, but who were young enough to be physically active, and preference was given to Swahili speakers”.⁶⁷ Only a superficial acknowledgement of the traditional influence of the elder generation-set was given, by appointing a council of elders as advisors to the new chiefs. The tasks of these new authority figures included collecting firearms, keeping the peace in their area, controlling the movement of stock (and thus herders), supplying (forced) labourers and porters for the building of roads and camps, and collecting a poll-tax and tithe of grain.⁶⁸ According to government records, in 1919, the total number of labourers was up to 2,000 men and women.⁶⁹ Those who resisted were fined, or in more extreme cases were executed or had their villages set on fire.⁷⁰ Turpin, the District Commissioner (DC) at the time was called *Lokijukwa* ‘the one who pushes’, and was remembered by the Karamojong as a “wicked and authoritarian man, who stayed in Moroto many years”.⁷¹

This imposition of colonial rule did not go unchallenged. The most acute cases of dissent were violent, such as the Battle of Kayepas in Bokora. Other incidents were to follow. In 1920, several small mountain tribes refused government orders to move their dwellings to areas accessible to patrols. Several battles were fought until the Napore and Ukuti were forcibly relocated. The killing of a young and able chief, Achia, in 1923 illustrated the growing frustration of the Karamojong. The DC at the time G.H.M. Lamb had instructed that no men were to leave the permanent settlements without the permission of their chief. This was to ensure a steady supply of labourers for government work. Only half of all men were permitted to leave for the grazing territories at any one time. “This rule was bitterly resented

⁶⁶ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg145.

⁶⁷ Ibid. pg144.

⁶⁸ Ibid. pg145, Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg69, Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects* pg61.

⁶⁹ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg69.

⁷⁰ Pazzaglia, *The Karamojong: Some Aspects* pg61.

⁷¹ Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg116.

by the Karamojong tribe. Their custom was for the elders to decide the timing of the move to the dry season areas. Once the date was set a ceremony was held 'to free the cattle', after which each herdsman made his own decisions about the movements of his stock."⁷² As Achia attempted to enforce this instruction by seizing cattle (a method commonly used by government officials), he was speared to death by an angry mob. Lamb, in his brief to Entebbe, did not have the insight to understand the underlying cause of the murder of Achia. He simply reported that "the basis of the trouble being the dislike of the people for work."⁷³

This incident should have been anticipated by the colonial officials as the Kiganda system of administration, which relied on the office of the chief and territorial units, was inimical to Karamojong society and values.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the creation of a hierarchical organizational structure was conflict causing, as the chief had no basis for his authority other than to be a legal representative of his people. In the Karamoja Annual Report of 1921, the British administration recognized this dilemma:

The influence of the elders is at present the greatest obstacle in the way of progress. As a result of this influence the majority of chiefs...are mere puppets, and have no authority. In many cases better men refuse the position of chief as they fear the influence of the elders which leads public opinion and makes the position far from enviable.⁷⁵

However, the Protectorate government, which replaced direct colonial rule had insisted on importing and imposing a foreign political concept to the Karamojong region/people, because it was thought to be the most efficient means of governing the 'natives'. While this system had been successfully introduced in the Acholi and Langi areas, its origins in the Buganda kingdom was based primarily on the fact that there was an indigenous precedent for a similar system of governance. The British acknowledged this policy failure in the 1951, Provincial Annual Report:

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg207.

⁷⁴ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg44.

⁷⁵ Barber, "A Pastoral People under Colonial Rule," pg115.

Whilst there are some chiefs of strength and character, the general standard is poor, particularly in the lower grades. This perhaps is not surprising for the important people in Karamoja are not the chiefs but the elders, who always have to be consulted on questions affecting grazing and local customs, for in such matters their authority is law. If this authority could be harnessed to the Local Government system the administration of Karamoja would be greatly simplified. The elders are intensely interested in anything, such as water supplies, inoculations or grazing rights, that affects their cattle but our preoccupation with roads, education, public works and such other means towards what we consider as progress arouse no enthusiasm amongst them and, therefore little amongst any section of the people.⁷⁶

Neville Dyson-Hudson, an anthropologist appointed by the Government of Uganda to study the Karamojong people, concluded that "In short, the position of the appointed chief- whether one regards the area or the manner of operation or the sanctioning source of his authority- represented the antithesis of every feature of the Karimojong political system."⁷⁷ This was one of the contributing factors to the poor relations which developed in the colonial era between the pastoralists and the nascent state.

Sources of Conflict: Static Notion of Territory

Although the British colonial authorities claimed territorial rights to the Karamoja cluster since Macdonald's Nile expedition in 1898, the officials in Entebbe had largely been instructed by the Colonial Office in London to avoid unnecessary obligations in the region at the beginning of the 20th century. When it became clear that the Abyssinians had expansionist ambitions in the area, officials of the Uganda Protectorate decided that a change of policy was necessary to protect its interests. As the Abyssinians had pointed out during the border dispute of 1910, although the British asserted their territorial claims to the Karamoja region, they had not committed any resources to the administration and/or control of the territory. Thus, the mission of the Northern Patrols of the K.A.R. deployed in 1911 addressed the issue of territorial integrity of the Uganda Protectorate in the Karamoja Cluster through patrolling the frontiers and preventing undesirable activity such as cross-border raiding and gun-running by traders. The borders of the Northern Province were determined not by those who inhabited the region or their needs, but rather by external actors. The District Commissioner of

⁷⁶ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg215.

⁷⁷ Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg12.

Karamoja noted in 1931 that the boundary between the East African and Uganda Protectorates "...consists of cleared tracks, heavily marked trees, native tracks and a cairn of stones – an artificial, complicated and thoroughly unsatisfactory boundary."⁷⁸ Over time, the British officials did not hesitate to re-draw the boundaries as necessary. For example, large swathes of what is now north-western Kenya were transferred to the East African Protectorate by the Uganda Protectorate by an Order in Council in 1926, however the Karasuk area was subsequently returned for Ugandan administration (but not possession) in 1931.⁷⁹ The British, like other imperial powers, viewed territory as a spatial entity, with permanent and defined borders, enshrined in legal treatises and other written documents.

The Karamojong people also have communally held notions of territory, however the rationale and practice of territorial integrity differs drastically from a Weberian conception. Pastoralists are/have been driven by the imperative to survive in sometimes harsh and unpredictable climatic conditions. The boundaries between communities depend on respective herding needs for grazing land and water at a given time. Grazing territory can change according to seasonal and long-term rain patterns and other environmental conditions, such as desertification.⁸⁰ Dyson-Hudson, an anthropologist specializing in the tribes of the Karamoja cluster, explains:

As far as the Karimojong themselves are concerned, the tribal land is defined in social, not spatial, terms...it is defined by reference to the group which occupies it and whose members have rights in it as against all outsiders...To this extent Karimojong carry their territorial rights with them as they move, and claims to territory can always be put to the test and clearly substantiated or lost. To lay claim to territory, one must use it; and if it is already occupied, one must first dispossess its inhabitants.⁸¹

As a result, the formation of boundaries are relative to the needs of neighbouring tribes for resources and are a dynamic process of negotiation through raiding, warfare and conciliation

⁷⁸ Tarsis B. Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1995) pg56.

⁷⁹ Ibid. pg53.

⁸⁰ Cisterjano, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg42-52. For examples of intra and inter-tribal territorial limits which fluctuate see Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg148-50.

⁸¹ Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg151.

meetings. The identification of territory for a Karamojong tribe is “the lands from which they can effectively expel enemies”.⁸² In general, territorial limits tend to follow natural features of the land, such as rivers, mountains etc. However the borders are not clearly demarcated, nor perpetual. Between the various communities, pastoralists respect no man’s lands, where communal grazing may or may not be permitted, but certainly settlements were not established. Furthermore, as a result of their pastoralist lifestyle, in which land is used in alternation, the tribes are not “perpetually committed to the defence of a single fixed boundary”,⁸³ in contrast to a state which is responsible for the territorial integrity of its society.

It is easy to surmise that these two very different conceptions of territory – the one held by the colonial government and those of pastoralists were not very compatible. Several actions by the Protectorate government aggravated these differences, precipitating conflict with the Karamojong. The closure of Karamoja by Jackson, the Governor of Uganda, in July 1911, was the beginning of the treatment of Karamoja as a “Human Zoo.” It had the effect of boxing the Karamojong in by restricting entry into and out of the administrative area. This was particularly detrimental to grazing patterns, as the dry season migration of the herds often extended past the district boundaries into Acholi, Lango and Teso territory, increasing competition for fewer resources and inducing environmental stress on land that was already used in the wet season. From the point of view of the government, the closure of the district and restriction of movement of the population, from 1921 onwards, made the civilian administration of the Karamojong more feasible. Administrative sub-units of the district were formed, for the purposes of tax collection and assembly of forced labour, and sub-chiefs were named for each sub-county, roughly based on clan membership.⁸⁴

⁸² Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology*, ed. Charles Tilly and Edward Shorter, *Studies in Social Discontinuity* (London: Academic Press, 1983) pg45.

⁸³ Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg153.

⁸⁴ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg66.

The restriction of movement within the district, and certainly out of the district, at best can be described as a naïve attempt at a territorially based socio-political system. Frederick Engels, in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* explains:

...the state, first, divides its subjects *according to territory*. As we have seen the old gentile associations, built upon and held together by ties of blood, became inadequate, largely because they presupposed that members were bound to a given territory, a bond which has long ceased to exist. The territory remained, but the people had become mobile. Hence, division according to territory was taken as the point of departure, and citizens were allowed to exercise their public rights and duties wherever they settled, irrespective of gens and tribe. This organization of citizens according to locality is a feature common to all states.⁸⁵

However, as discussed in the section on “Authority”, pastoralist societies have a very different socio-political structure than sedentary communities. And whilst the Karamojong are organized under a sub-section system nominally linked to territory and sub-clans, in practice, the territorial units are flexible and overlapping amongst settlements of the same clan.⁸⁶ Individual rights (to natural resources) by ‘outsiders’ are not conferred by residency, but rather granted by elders after acceptance into the community. Furthermore:

(Some) Karimojong are to be found living outside the area associated with their ‘own’ (natal) subsection...such people regard themselves as, and are described as, members of their natal subsection rather than of that in which they are living. But they perform rituals with the sub-section among which they live, for all neighbourhood ceremonial grounds have a subsection affiliation.⁸⁷

Dyson-Hudson suggests that “...even territorial groups within Karimojong society are taken to *confer* identity on land rather than *derive* identity from it, with the result that the social identity of such groups persists despite the dispersal (temporary or permanent) of its members”.⁸⁸

To explain in anthropological detail the particularities of the Karamojong social system is beyond the remit of this study, however, for the purpose of this discussion what is important to emphasize is the inappropriateness of forcing a territorially based socio-political

⁸⁵ David Held, et al., ed., *States and Societies* (Oxford: Martin Robertson Ltd., 1983) pg103.

⁸⁶ The sub-section system exists concurrently with the age-set system, to form the particular Karamojong socio-political system. Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg119.

⁸⁷ Ibid. pg122.

⁸⁸ Ibid. pg152.

structure on a pastoralist society which practices transhumance. The imposition of artificial borders had several negative effects. First, it severely disrupted existing customs within and between tribes. Recognizing this, the Governor of the East African Protectorate wrote in 1931:

‘The attitude of the Karamojong is that if these people (Turkana and Suk) wish to share our grazing and water, let them come into our general life and administration. We can organise our grazing and settle our disputes in the tribe, but we cannot do it while we are under different administration.’⁸⁹

One author has suggested that cross-border cattle raiding increased after the demarcation of territory in the Karamoja Cluster, due to the opportunities of hiding stolen cattle on the other side of the frontier, and the difficulties of chasing enemy raiders across jurisdictions.⁹⁰ More broadly, limited access to grazing land and water by the imposition of border appears to have increased social conflict amongst pastoralists. ‘As access to land diminished and populations of people and livestock increased against available resources, there emerged acute competition for water and pasture.’⁹¹ Thus enclosing the pastoralists was environmentally unsustainable and detrimental to their way of life. This second point will be discussed in greater detail later. Consequently, examples of Karamojong resistance, such as the killing of Chief Achia, are hardly surprising.

What the British colonial authorities failed to comprehend was that:

Except where his possessions or dependents remain in it, the Karimojong herder has little interest in territory other than that which he occupies at the moment, or intends to move to in the immediate future. He is concerned with access to grass and water as his herds require them; and like his use of land, his claims to land are temporary and repetitive, not perpetual.⁹²

Although it is possible that the colonial officials misunderstood the nature of transhumant societies, where the population may live in permanent homesteads and travel to the dry-season cattle camps, it is more likely that the Protectorate authorities were concerned with the

⁸⁹ Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda* pg57.

⁹⁰ Ibid. pg55.

⁹¹ Joshia O. Osamba, *Peace building and Transformation from below: Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation among the Pastoral Societies in the Borderlands of Eastern Africa*. (African Journal in Conflict Resolution, No. 1, 2001 [accessed 8 Sept 2003]); available from: <http://www.accord.org.za>.

⁹² Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg151.

modalities of governance and assumed that a sedentary lifestyle could be gradually introduced to the pastoralists. This may have resulted, but it had unintended negative consequences in terms of conflict resolution between pastoralist communities.

Sources of Conflict: 'Western' experience of development

A Western concept of development, based on capitalism had very little relevance for the Karamojong who lived in a barter society dependent on a way of life which did not explicitly produce any goods for sale. Underlying the administration's development projects was the assumption that once these 'primitive people' were introduced to the stability of sedentary agriculture, they would renounce an itinerant lifestyle. However anthropologists have noted that it is common amongst pastoralists to retain a normative preference for their way of life, even after learning about other lifestyles.⁹³ As for any other society, pastoralists strongly believe that their own society is good and desirable. The Karamojong are united in the conviction that the acquisition, possession and maintenance of cattle is desirable and in the best interests of all members of society. There is also general agreement within Karamojong society about how this mode of production should be achieved. "Cattle must have water and grass and all agree that this can be done by moving the herds to various locations at various times. If a man is without cattle, all agree that he can take cattle from some other group. If another group is on tribal lands, all agree that this must be stopped for all are equally affected."⁹⁴

Hence the Karamojong people did not share a common understanding with the British colonial officials about what constituted development or progress. In the very broadest sense, administrators in Uganda were introducing the Protectorate into an international capitalist monetary economy, by encouraging the development of exportable goods. However, the Karamojong economy was, and still is for many of its inhabitants, tribal and barter-based. Traditionally, tobacco and objects forged from iron, such as spears, cattle bells, ornaments

⁹³ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg33.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

and hoes were procured from neighbouring tribes in exchange for stock.⁹⁵ Due to the pastoralists' conception of wealth and necessity for movement, there was little desire or need to accumulate material goods. What few items produced elsewhere, were bought from the small stores in towns, these include: "beads, wire ornaments, small ornamental chains, axes, hoes, ostrich feathers, (bi)cycles and ploughs...and aluminium cooking pots".⁹⁶ These goods were bought with cattle profits, as capital in such an economy is held in the form of cattle and other stock.

From the beginning, the economic policy of the Government for Karamoja was oriented towards an agricultural, not pastoral, economy. This emulated successful development patterns in other parts of Uganda, such as the pastoral Teso area, which by the 1920s was producing lucrative cotton for export. Although the Karamojong were already cultivating pumpkins and sorghum, during the military and early civil administration, they were encouraged to increase their small agricultural output to include crops such as tomatoes, cassava, groundnuts, cow peas, maize, sweet potatoes, bananas and even cotton.⁹⁷ Initially the emphasis on agriculture was to ensure adequate food supplies for the military and police garrisons stationed in Karamoja. Later, it was to discourage a perceived over-reliance on cattle keeping, and to initiate communal granaries to avoid famine.⁹⁸ The logic of a meagre crop production was primarily due to the "harsh and unpredictable climate, extreme seasonality, inhospitable terrain and variable biomass production".⁹⁹ Although it would appear that the Karamojong ecosystem on average receives sufficient rain for large-scale

⁹⁵ Neville Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society: The Karimojong of Northeast Uganda," in *Black Africa: Its Peoples and Their Cultures Today*, ed. John Middleton (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), pg63.

⁹⁶ This list was provided to Dyson-Hudson by a Karamojong chief's council in 1956. Ibid., pg64.

⁹⁷ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg6-7, Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society," pg58, E.J. Wayland, "Preliminary Studies of the Tribes of Karamoja," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 61 (1931): pg218.

⁹⁸ Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society," pg58.

⁹⁹ Sandra Gray, Paul Leslie, and Helen Alinga Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," in *The Last of the Nomadic Herders*, ed. W.R Leonard and M.H. Crawford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, draft version), pg3.

agriculture, the incidence, amount and location of the rainfall is unpredictable.¹⁰⁰ Droughts occur on average once every six years. Thus semi-sedentary agriculture is used to supplement food staples, such as milk and blood, produced by cattle.

Despite repeated failures, throughout the British administration, until the mid-1950s, agriculture remained the recommended economic priority in the district. Even as late as 1945, the Government was initiating experimental agricultural farms. In 1946, a District Agricultural Officer was allotted, two years before the appointment of a District Veterinary Officer.¹⁰¹ During this time, the main mode of production amongst the Karamojong remained the rearing and keeping of cattle and other stock. Unconvinced by the colonial authorities, the pastoralists continued to view cattle as a reliable food source and the most efficient means of production. Enduring Karamojong notions of development therefore included larger herds and bigger families.¹⁰² In contrast, the colonial officials viewed "cattle as a problem to be solved, not as a resource to be developed."¹⁰³ By 1961, shortly before independence, a Uganda Protectorate government report concluded:

In comparison with conditions now obtaining in and standards achieved by other parts of Uganda, and using the generally accepted yardstick of Western civilisation to measure development, Karamoja is, ...between twenty and fifty years behind other parts of Uganda. This backwardness is social, cultural, ethical and economic.¹⁰⁴

However, areas of successful development, by Western standards, such as the southern kingdom of Buganda, were regarded by the Karamojong as having changed to such an extent that they were now populated by "Black Europeans".¹⁰⁵ The Karamojong, in contrast, consider themselves to already possess what they most value, and what seems to be the most

¹⁰⁰ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg16.

¹⁰¹ Even then, the District Veterinary Officer was posted at the quarantine centre, where cattle was kept before exportation out of Karamoja. Cisterino explicitly questions whether the DVO was truly posted in the District to improve the general health of the herds. Ibid. pg74, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg76.

¹⁰² Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg68. Stinchcombe postulates that because of the very high and variable death rates amongst the Karamojong, and the importance of labour given their simple material culture and low level of technology, large families are preferable. Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* pg95, 149-52, 99-200.

¹⁰³ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg80.

¹⁰⁴ B.K. Bataringaya, "Report of the Karamoja Security Committee," (Entebbe, Uganda: Uganda Protectorate, 1961), pg10.

¹⁰⁵ Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society," pg50.

logical mode of production given their unpredictable environment: cattle. Government attempts to sedentarize the Karamojong for the purposes of 'development' based on a capitalist understanding have largely been resisted by the pastoralists. This conflict of lifestyles has contributed to tense relations between the state and the Karamojong.

Sources of Conflict: Conservation and restrictive coping mechanisms

Although the colonial officials had hoped that Karamoja would cease to be an exception and willed the district to develop like the rest of Uganda, by 1953, the Protectorate Government had largely given up on the development of agriculture in the north-east as an export industry. An official report from this time stated "As agriculture is problematic, ranching schemes and stock raising are the future answer, while soil erosion and pasture degeneration are to be checked."¹⁰⁶ The 1953-1955 East African Royal Commission's Report wholly encouraged the exploitation of cattle, through ranching, citing the success of the White settlers in the Kenyan highlands. Furthermore, it denounced the 'closed district' policy as detrimental to trade, but not for its negative effects on the local inhabitants.¹⁰⁷ The Ugandan Governor, in a general reply to the Commission's findings wrote "I agree with the Commission's contention that water development should not be undertaken merely to perpetuate subsistence agriculture or herds of unproductive stock (i.e. subsistence stock) and that it should be undertaken when it is likely to lead to the production of marketable surplus."¹⁰⁸ British officials at the time, no less arrogant than many previous administrations continued to believe that they knew best how to develop the Karamoja cluster. There was a persistent and fundamental lack of understanding regarding pastoralism as both a way of life and as a mode of production.¹⁰⁹ The common consensus in Entebbe was (and to some extent

¹⁰⁶ In this quote, "stock raising" refers to rearing cattle, not the increase of herd sizes. Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg75.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. pg78.

¹⁰⁸ Dispatches from the Ugandan Governor, in response to the East African Royal Commission 1953-1955 Report. Ibid. pg25.

¹⁰⁹ Welch and Dyson-Hudson suggest that part of the lack of familiarity of the needs and customs of the Karamojong stems from the 'musical chairs' policy of posting administrative officers in the district. Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg88-89.

still is) that pastoralism is not sustainable or is environmentally harmful, some officials even blaming reoccurring famine in Karamoja on the pastoralists' mobility.¹¹⁰ Perhaps more importantly for the government, a "herder's need to exploit territory in a shifting fashion is assumed to threaten the security and the resources of the settled population".¹¹¹ Thus by the end of the colonial period, while the economic potential of animal husbandry and livestock production gained acceptance, this was not correlated to a pastoralist lifestyle.

The last colonial District Plan in 1958 initiated a new economic development policy in Karamoja that was based on de-stocking (of cattle herds) and land conservation in an effort to achieve an environmental equilibrium in the district. It largely complimented efforts of the previous ten years, which attempted to reduce the environmental impact of pastoralism by creating conservation areas and constructing boreholes and dams. Paradoxically, many of these initiatives actually encouraged over-grazing of fertile land and exasperated inter-tribal conflicts by restricting the movement of people and stock, and resettling communities. Over the colonial period, the Karamojong lost approximately 15% of their traditional grazing territory to the North and West (Lango and Teso Districts), when the District border was closed in 1911. Further territory was expropriated by the government in 1927, and apportioned to the Suk (Pokot) from the East African Protectorate (Kenya), causing displacement and resettlement of Pian, Matheniko and Bokora populations.¹¹² Later in the 1940s and 1950s, large chunks of the most fertile Karamojong land were gazetted as forest reserves, and game reserves, such as Kidepo National Park, prohibiting their use by local communities.¹¹³ The boreholes and dams created artificial and year-round watering points, which reduced the necessity to migrate in search of water (allowing the grazing land to regenerate in the off-season). In the long-term these artificial watering points were

¹¹⁰ Ocan, "CBR Working Paper No.20," pg18.

¹¹¹ Dysqn-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society," pg72.

¹¹² Gray, Leslie, and Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," pg18, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg83.

¹¹³ J. Oloka-Onyango, Gariyo Zie, and Frank Emmanuel Muhereza, "Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation in Karamoja: Report of a Workshop," (Kampala, Uganda: Centre for Basic Research, 1992), pg4.

particularly detrimental to the environmental management of the ecosystem as they coincided with a prolonged period of favourable rainfall and rapid growth of the livestock herds and Karamojong population.¹¹⁴

Perhaps unbeknownst to the officials in Entebbe, the Karamojong had coping mechanisms of their own in order to deal with their semi-arid environment; however these methods largely depended on the freedom of movement, careful knowledge of their ecosystem and co-operative herding. Whilst it is true that the Karamojong practise high stocking rates, requiring between 6-10 heads of cattle per person for adequate alimentary needs, it is a misnomer that a pastoralist “lacks a basic concept of breeding” or “seeks to make through quantity what he cannot obtain through quality”.¹¹⁵ Herds are bred to ensure that there are no surplus bulls or low quality (sick or low yielding) animals, and managed to include species with different forage needs and varying resistance to environmental stress.¹¹⁶ Other strategies depend on a pastoralist’s knowledge of their ecosystem, but very little in the way of technology. For example, before the anticipation of the rainy season, controlled burning of grass in grazing land may occur in order to kill Tse-tse flies and to fertilize better growth of grass, however this act is very carefully timed to ensure minimum destruction of a reusable resource.¹¹⁷ Otherwise, the single most important strategy of a pastoralist is the rotational movement over long distances to maximize water and grazing land, and to lessen the effects of drought and disease. Sociologist Arthur Stinchcombe argues that for the Karamojong (unlike other more technologically developed societies), resources are used where they are to be found, due to poor storage capabilities.¹¹⁸ As a result, people and stock are required to move in order to exploit the natural resources. Movement of the herd depends on the

¹¹⁴ Gray, Leslie, and Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," pg25, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg75.

¹¹⁵ Gray, Leslie, and Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," pg7, Novelli, *Aspects of Karimojong Ethnosociology* pg97, 101, Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* pg41.

¹¹⁶ Gray, Leslie, and Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," pg7, Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* pg94.

¹¹⁷ Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* pg95.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. pg44.

pastoralist's knowledge of varying nutritional qualities of the grasses at different times of the year and in different locations, as well as calculations about the carrying capacity and duration of natural (seasonal) watering points.¹¹⁹ Ad hoc management of resources, by restricting access to newcomers or ex-communitarians, occurs when the carrying capacity of the grazing land or watering hole is threatened.

Other coping methods have a more socio-cultural value and rely less on the external environment. For example, some herders split their stock amongst family or clan members' herd. This acts as a kind of insurance by limiting stock loss during localized droughts or raids. However more broadly, spreading the herd binds the families through closer social ties. These relations might also be called upon in times of crop failure. As the strategic and environmental conditions of the Karamojong are unpredictable and stock loss occurs due to disease, drought, warfare etc., the most common means of replenishing a herd is through raiding. By restricting trade between Karamoja and her neighbours, the colonial officials exacerbated the recourse to what was already a socially acceptable practise. Raiding is a traditional coping mechanism of the Karamojong, which also has a socio-economic role in their culture. Neville Dyson-Hudson, an anthropologist, collected this statement from a Karamojong in 1957:

Everybody wants to find a wife, friends, happiness; to become a man of importance and influence. Without cattle he cannot achieve any of these things. So each person thinks to himself, "Where shall I find cattle?" (And the answer is) "From foreigners." So he resolves to go to an enemy country, and kill for cattle.¹²⁰

The incongruent social, economic and juridical understanding of raiding between the pastoralists and the government is a source of their conflict. For the Karamojong, traditionally, raiding was considered a legitimate activity. They considered it to serve several functions necessary for the maintenance of cattle, including the control of the environment, security of tribal land, repulsion of competing pastoral groups and depreciating non-

¹¹⁹ Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in North-eastern Uganda," pg7, Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* pg41.

¹²⁰ Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg103.

Karamojong stock.¹²¹ Furthermore, raiding was often a means for men to display their courage and skill. Whereas for the British cattle rustling was a criminal endeavour, of concern to the state, especially when the rustling spilled over into other parts of the Protectorate.¹²² By the end of the colonial period in Uganda, raiding of other communities was occurring on a large scale. Between 1958 and 1961, Teso and Sebei Districts reported 297 raids combined.¹²³ By 1961, a Karamoja Security Committee submitted their report to Entebbe on the security problems in Karamoja District.¹²⁴ The Bataringaya Report concluded:

The problem facing Karamoja is a virtual breakdown of law and order...By far the most outstanding and the most frequent *crime*...in Karamoja is cattle raiding and homicide connected with it...These raids seem to be not only a lucrative but also a respectable pastime with a great deal of prestige attached to it...The motive for the raids therefore is not only economic but also social, the lines between the two being even thinner here than it is in *civilized* and *settled* societies.¹²⁵

The colonial administration did not understand that raiding was considered a legitimate activity by the Karamojong communities and therefore had a function in society. Thus the British never attempted to develop a policy that could have fulfilled the role of raiding in a peaceful, less violent way, such as stock insurance schemes or government restocking due to drought or rustling. Their methods of conservation coupled with a continuation of Karamojong pastoralist practices, albeit in a smaller, enclosed area, resulted in a serious degradation of the environment in Karamoja. The resulting deforestation, desertification, reduction of the water table and devastation of wildlife are some of the legacies leftover from the British colonial period.

Conclusions

Although the British Uganda Protectorate presided over Karamoja scarcely fifty years, the introduction of government and their inappropriate development initiatives had a

¹²¹ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg29.

¹²² Ibid. pg42.

¹²³ Ibid. pg117.

¹²⁴ Bataringaya, "Bataringaya Report," pgiii.

¹²⁵ Italics added. Ibid., pg4.

major impact on the Karamojong, which is reflected in contemporary challenges of the district, such as state-society relations. The kind of contact that the Karamojong had with their neighbours and the state indicate the growing schism that developed between pastoralists and non-pastoralist actors in the first half of the 20th century. During the period of military administration, 1911-21, only three traders were permitted into the region; their shops primarily served the police and troops stationed in Karamoja.¹²⁶ Any nascent cattle trading activity with neighbouring communities, including white settlers in the southeast was effectively halted.¹²⁷ By 1936, only eight permanent trading centres existed in the district. This number would remain the same until 1958.¹²⁸ Thus even under civilian administration, very little effort was made by the Protectorate officials to integrate Karamoja with the rest of Uganda. This policy failure was recognized in 1961 by the *Report of the Karamoja Security Committee*:

While the other districts of Uganda have had close contact with the Western and Oriental influences for several decades and while this influence has done a great deal to change and/or modify their tribal customs, diversify their economy, raise their standards of living and change their way of and outlook on life...Their (the Karamojong) social life and tribal organisation have been very little affected by either missionary influence or Government pressure...The imposition of the Outlying Districts Ordinance and to a certain degree, the Special Regions Ordinance, which have put great restraint on the entry of other tribes, have been a further barrier to outside influence on the Karamojong, leaving them almost completely insulated against any external influence.¹²⁹

The fact is that Karamoja, throughout the colonial period, was considered abnormal and problematic. It's geographical location between Sudan and the East African Protectorate, and within proximity to the Abyssinian empire, meant that the district had a certain strategic value. However, the perceived disorder within its frontiers made it a particular challenge for Entebbe. Amongst the governing authorities, there was little understanding of the values and customs of the Karamojong people, nor appreciation that pastoralism, as a way of life, was a

¹²⁶ Barber, *Imperial Frontier* pg152.

¹²⁷ Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg57.

¹²⁸ Ibid. pg75.

¹²⁹ Bataringaya, "Bataringaya Report," pg10.

rational and efficient response to a harsh semi-arid environment. The policy emphasis, consistently throughout this period, was to minimize the "...problem posed by Karamoja to the Uganda community as a whole..."¹³⁰ Thus the aims of administering the district, were not inherently to develop Karamoja, but rather to contain the "primitiveness" and "lawlessness" of the pastoralists from spilling over into other districts. Similarly, there were no concerted efforts to negotiate an understanding with the Karamojong that with the establishment of the Uganda Protectorate, pastoral communities were to be a part of a "wider geo-political and economic entity".¹³¹ For the Karamojong people, government officials were *arieng* – people to be afraid of, to hide from, because the "Government eats our cattle".¹³² They wonder who on earth has put the Government, or *ngiserukari*, as judges, and why they must always pay their fines in heads of cattle.¹³³ At the heart of the discordant relationship between the two, lay incompatible values, aims and means of achieving each party's goals.

In effect, British policy in the Ugandan Protectorate scarcely differentiated between pastoralists and agriculturalists in terms of administration and public interest. The officials in Entebbe assumed that sedentary agriculture of exportable products would be the best strategy for development of Karamoja, as it had been successful in many other districts of the Protectorate. There was very little interest in developing the existing assets of the district, namely cattle and other stock. Even in the Bataringaya Report of 1961, non-pastoralist 'experts' continue to propose "settling the arable areas with agricultural people...we hope this scheme would by and by encourage the Karamojong to eat more grain and would, by gradually changing their diet habits, in due course create a tendency in some to sell their cattle in order to buy food, and others to grow the food themselves."¹³⁴ Furthermore, during the approximately fifty years of colonial administration, very little in the way of human or

¹³⁰ Ibid., pgiii.

¹³¹ Osamba, *Peace building and Transformation from below* ([accessed]).

¹³² Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society," pg60, 67.

¹³³ The Government (whether colonial or post-colonial), are called "soldiers" in Akaramojong, because soldiers enforce the seizure of cattle as payment of fines for illegal acts. Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg65.

¹³⁴ Bataringaya, "Bataringaya Report," pg28.

financial resources were invested in Karamoja, with frequent changes in personnel affecting the institutional knowledge of the region. Later attempts of environmental conservation by officials, such as creating gazetted parks and artificial watering points, exacerbated the delicate ecological balance between pastoralist and nature. Traditional methods of coping, such as migration, were less feasible due to restrictions on mobility, resulting in a vicious circle of cause and effect.

Finally, an examination of the colonial period demonstrates that many of the contemporary concerns in Karamoja, such as raiding and firearms proliferation were as prescient and problematic then as they are today. As global weaponry technology quickly evolved, the British response in East Africa was aimed at controlling the supply of firearms in indigenous hands at the sub-regional level and restoring administrative and territorial control in Karamoja. However ever since their appearance in the late 19th century, the British and subsequent post-colonial governments have failed to appreciate that the demand for small arms and their usage are symbolic of the survival challenges facing Karamojong societies.

Part Two

The Karamoja Case Study

Chapter 5:

The Post-Colonial Period:

Pastoralism, Small Arms and Disarmament

1961 - 2003

Chapter 5: The Post-Colonial Period: Pastoralism, Small Arms and Disarmament, 1961-2003

Introduction

The Bataringaya Report of 1961 was the first official report on Karamoja to be written by African administrators as part of the transition of power during de-colonization. It signalled a continuation of the pacification and domination approach taken by the British towards Karamoja. The report describes the challenges of developing Karamoja, Uganda, as a problem of law and order. This report largely sets the tone for post-colonial attitudes of the state towards the pastoralist North-eastern region and was the basis for all subsequent legislation on Karamoja until 1967. Government documents spanning from this time onwards, to the recent Ten Point Program of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government have continued to reiterate the idea that Karamoja is a district whose population requires pacification and/or 'fixing'. I have argued in the previous chapter that this point of view and approach stems largely from a profound misunderstanding of the nature of pastoralism, as a primitive mode of production, which is simply adaptive or predatory of the local environment. Failing to recognize that pastoral activity is productive, is one of the reasons that government officials have favoured sedentary and agricultural patterns of development.

This chapter will attempt to contextualize the current crisis in the Karamoja region in order to explain why disarmament has been consistently resisted by the pastoralists. The first section examines the constant recourse to disarmament in Karamoja as a policy of pacification and development during the colonial and post-colonial period, and examines the impact this had on state-society relations. The second section introduces the aspect of militarisation of the conflict, such as the strategic positions the Karamojong people had in relation to their neighbours, and how they acquired their firearms. Also discussed in this section is the inconsistent arms control policy of various Ugandan regimes after

independence towards the Karamojong people and how this affected the pastoralists' perception of the messages of disarmament. The next section examines the gradual social mutation of Karamojong society, examining new social values and sources of authority, in addition to the role of the contemporary 'gun culture.' This is very closely related to the fourth section, which focuses on the commercialization of cattle raiding and its economic impact on pastoralist societies. The fifth and sixth sections discuss the increasing population of the region, degradation of the environment in Karamoja, and how relations with neighbouring districts were affected. Lastly, the elite and national attitudes towards the pastoralists and their way of life will be examined and analyzed, to explain why the Karamojong continue to be marginalized in Uganda.

By providing a survey and analysis of the economic, social, political, strategic and environmental challenges facing Karamoja in the post-colonial period, this chapter will implicitly question the appropriateness of disarmament as a policy of development and means of integrating the pastoralists into the national fold.

A History of Disarmament in Karamoja during the Post-Colonial Period

As discussed in the previous chapter, disarmament and the state's pre-occupation with the proliferation of firearms in Karamojong sub-region has a history dating back from the earliest British administrations of the Ugandan Protectorate to the present day. All of the governments that the Karamojong have encountered have prioritized law and order issues in the governance of the region, such as the prohibition of raiding. This, coupled with a fundamental lack of understanding of the pastoralist way of life, resulted in persistent attempts to impose a policy of disarmament when dealing with the pastoralists both during and after the British colonial period.

The Bataringaya Report of 1961, was significant because it did not attempt to change the relationship between Karamojong society and the state in the post-colonial period.¹ Instead, this report signalled that the African administrators would continue to replicate the patronizing colonial logic of authority and legitimacy through coercion. It suggested the overwhelming use of force to “show the flag” and “recover the lost prestige of the Government” by disarming the entire region of Karamoja.² A pattern would develop in the post-colonial period, in which failed attempts at disarmament would symbolize the complex struggle of wills between the centralized state and the people of Karamoja.

Although disarmament on the scale envisioned by *The Bataringaya Report* never materialized, periodic and ad hoc attempts by the state occurred throughout the post-independence era, beginning with a serious attempt in 1968.³ These operations were often punitive in nature and accompanied by an ethos of modernization through forced de-stocking and other policies which supported de-pastoralisation.

During the brutal regime of Idi Amin that lasted from 1971-1979, Karamoja suffered greatly, as did the rest of Uganda. Amin was no stranger to the Karamoja region, having been commissioned as an officer of the King’s African Rifles regiment in the early 1960s. Amin participated in the forcible disarmament activities in Karamoja during this period:

In Uganda the north-eastern Karimojong tribes were reluctant to surrender their spears and shields, and another British officer who served with Amin at the time had boasted that Amin was remarkably successful in persuading them. He made them stand with their penises on the table and then threatened to cut the organs off with a machete unless they told him where their spears and shields were hidden.⁴

The colonial authorities were aware of Amin’s excessive violence when dealing with the local population during this time. Amin was reprimanded for an incident in which a patrol of

¹ Welch, notes that the “Bataringaya Report was the only report on the District made by an African government”, presumably during the British Protectorate period. C.P. Welch, “Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict: A Study of Karamoja District, 1897-1968” (Master of Arts Thesis, University of East Africa, 1969) pg122.

² B.K. Bataringaya, “Report of the Karamoja Security Committee,” (Entebbe, Uganda: Uganda Protectorate, 1961), pg16.

³ Charles Emunyu Ocan, “Pastoralism and Crisis in North-Eastern Uganda: Factors that have determined social change in Karamoja,” (Kampala: Centre for Basic Research, 1992), pg55.

⁴ David Martin, *General Amin* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974) pg17.

troops under his leadership were sent to disarm Turkana raiders on the Kenyan side of the border, but were later discovered to have tortured and massacred the pastoralists instead.⁵

Shortly after Amin seized power in 1971, he proclaimed by decree that the population living in the Karamojong region must wear Western style clothing, forbidding nakedness and the traditional dress of animal skins, beads, and bare feet. This decree was enforced in 1973, when hundreds of Karamojong in Kagole, Matany and Lotame were shot for refusing to part with their traditional garments (or lack of attire).⁶ In other instances, women were forcibly stripped in public and coerced at gunpoint to crush their glass beads and burn their animal skins in bonfires.⁷ A landmark at Nawaikorot, in Karamoja commemorates this brutal policy, and the year 1973 is named by the Karamojong after the Lubara Sergeant Apalothiel who enforced the decree. However, in spite of this government decree, it had no long term effect on the Karamojong, who continue to wear their traditional dress in defiance of the government decree.⁸ These actions were part of Amin's plan to modernize the pastoralists, which also included agricultural policies that forced the Karamojong to grow cotton, and stop cattle raiding or face the firing squad.⁹

In 1979, Idi Amin's regime collapsed at the hands of the Tanzanian People's Defense Force (TPDF) and the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). As a result, the abandoned Moroto military armoury was looted by Karamojong warriors. This resulted in the high levels of gun proliferation that are often cited today.¹⁰ These weapons were subsequently

⁵ Amin was not court martialled for this massacre as he was only one of two serving African officers. Ibid. pg19.

⁶ Some Karamojong believe the incident at Kangole, in Bokora County, cause animosity between the Bokora and Matheniko, as some chose to respect the decree, whilst those who defied it were killed. Nathalie Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," *L'Afrique Orientale*, (2002): pg256, Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Time-line Showing the Genesis of Armed Cattle Raiding, Insecurity and the Establishment of Vigilantes* ([accessed 13 June 2003]); available from: http://www.karamojadata.org/history_guns_inkaramoja/htm.

⁷ Sandra Gray, "'We were running, running'" Ecological politics, local history, and the evolution of Karimojong violence," (University of Kansas, Dept of Anthropology, 2000), pg27-28.

⁸ The latest weapons collection program in 2001-2002 also included a decree by a military official banning the traditional garment the 'suka'.

⁹ Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Timeline*.

¹⁰ This event will be treated in greater depth in the section on the Militarization of the conflict. In between the overthrow of Idi Amin in April 1979 and the beginning of Milton Obote's regime in July 1980, there were two short governments headed by Yusuf Lule and Geoffery Binaisa.

used during extensive raids in neighbouring districts to the south and west of Karamoja.¹¹ The security situation in this region was of such concern by the end of 1979 that the TPDF established and armed local militias called 'Home Guards' in the Teso region.¹² In 1980, the government of Milton Obote II continued the 'Home Guard' policy by recruiting tribal militias in all of the districts neighbouring Karamoja after the TPDF retreated from Uganda.¹³ Obote, who was from Northern Uganda, was sympathetic to the complaints by the Acholi, Iteso and Langi communities who were concerned with the problem of cattle rustling. He pursued an aggressive policy of containment of the Karamojong. In the early 1980s, the tribal militias organized punitive counter-raids into Karamoja, which escalated in 1984 into a major military operation to disarm the pastoralists. By February 1984, the Kenyan and Ugandan government had mounted a joint operation which involved the use of helicopter gun ships to combat cattle raiding. However, this exercise resulted in the burning of all the principle trading centers in Moroto and many civilian deaths.¹⁴ Shortly thereafter in March of 1984, the Iteso militias burned the Iriir and Kangole trading centres, while the Langi and Acholi militias aided by Ugandan Special Forces destroyed cattle, homesteads and crops around the villages of Namalu and Nabilatuk, which resulted in the displacement of over 20,000 people.¹⁵ The Obote government sanctioned the actions of the militias, as they were associated with powerful members of the regime, such as an Army General and the then Ministers of State for Internal Affairs and Defense.¹⁶ The immediate effects in Karamoja of

¹¹ Michael D. Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society: Karamoja, Uganda, 1996," *African Studies Quarterly*, 1, no. 1 (1997): pg5.

¹² Dan Micheal Ochyengh, "A Case Study of Cattle Rustling in Teso" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg7.

¹³ Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg254, Peter Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg6, Hon. Peter Okwara, "Family, Women and Children in the Context of Insecurity" (paper presented at the Conference on strategies for peace and sustainable development for Karamoja and neighbouring districts, Makerere University Main Hall, 18-22 July 1994), pg5.

¹⁴ Gray, "We were running, running," pg32, A.B.K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1999) pg191, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg2.

¹⁵ Ed Hooper and Louise Pirouet, "Uganda," (London: Minority Rights Group, 1989), pg15., Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* pg192.

¹⁶ Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg254.

Obote II's government policies between 1981-1984 were over 1,000 persons killed and 40,000 persons displaced. However, the government claimed that the resulting famine of 1985 was caused by a "natural disaster".¹⁷ The use of tribal politics for regime survival by the Obote II government has had a much longer legacy of inciting bitter relations between the people of Karamoja and the neighbouring districts.¹⁸

Throughout the political turmoil of Uganda's post-independence period, and despite their lack of engagement in the national political struggles, the people of Karamoja region were consistently targeted for disarmament by each regime. Often, these punitive efforts to eradicate cattle raiding by removing the weapons of the pastoralists have been in response to tribal constituencies, rather than the security needs of the state itself. By July 1985, the government of Obote II was overthrown by two Acholi military officers, General Tito Okello and Colonel Basilio Okello. Although their government did not last more than six months, they also attempted a forceful disarmament in Kotido district using helicopter gun ships.¹⁹

The present Ugandan government, shortly after coming to power in 1986, attempted a more sustained, but ultimately futile effort to disarm the Karamojong as part of their national consolidation of power. Similar to many of the previous ad hoc attempts at disarmament, the National Resistance Army (NRA) exercise was not a formalized disarmament program, but rather a result of an unplanned series of events.²⁰ The NRA had begun to forcefully disarm the Karamojong when they entered the region after conquering the capital city of Kampala; however the NRA had limited forces in the north-east of the country. In 1987, NRA soldiers stationed in Kotido District confiscated a large number of cattle belonging to the Jie clan, in an attempt to persuade a family to turn in a suspected criminal who had escaped capture. Instead the Jie warriors threatened the army and demanded the return of their cattle from the

¹⁷ There was a drought in Karamoja in 1984, but the military operations of that year ensured that there was no production from the region's granary. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* pg192.

¹⁸ Ibid. pg190, Okwara, "Family, Women and Children in the Context of Insecurity", pg5.

¹⁹ Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Timeline*.

²⁰ The political wing of the National Resistance Army would later become the National Resistance Movement, the regime currently in power in Uganda.

army barracks. The next morning, the Jie warriors attacked the Kotido army barracks and town. As a result, the army had to call for reinforcements from the south. Military planes and helicopters were also sent from the Gulu, and were used to bomb the Jie warriors. In the aftermath, with over 200 NRA soldiers killed, the army began a disarmament program in the region which involved using their '3-piece Kandoya' method.²¹ This involved suspending people "...from poles by their bound knees and elbows to compel them to reveal the location of weapons".²² While many guns were seized during the course of this operation, the NRA worsened civil-military relations with the pastoralists, by bullying local residents and looting stores. Moreover, complete disarmament was never achieved as the NRA was soon sent westwards to fight a more serious rebellion in Northern Uganda.²³

In general, interactions between the Karamojong and the numerous governments in the post-independence era have not been particularly positive or productive for either group. The Karamojong experience of disarmament during this period has largely been one of brutality, punishment, and force, at the hands of the army, police or militias – who have acted in the name of the state. The state, represented by various regimes, in effect has attempted to control and claim the exclusive right to use force, by the use of arbitrary violence. The effect of these consistently failed disarmament efforts has been the de-legitimization of the authority of both the state and its representatives. As a result, the pastoralists have developed a pattern of relations with the government more associated with defiance and disregard, not cooperation, especially with regards to issues of forced modernization or change of lifestyle. Moreover, the communities of Karamoja have developed a self-help system involving the extensive use of small arms because of a lack of stable government at both the state and local level, and paucity of solutions to address their problems of insecurity, economic development, and drought. In effect, the weapons have aided the Karamojong people to exploit a situation of political uncertainty for their own (short-term) benefit.

²¹ Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Timeline*.

²² Gray, "We were running, running," pg32.

²³ Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg5.

Militarisation of the conflict

While weapons have been present in the Karamoja cluster since the beginning of the 20th century, the high levels of proliferation observed today can be closely linked to the political turmoil of the post-independence period in Uganda. From around the time of independence onwards, the Karamojong were frequently raided by their pastoralist neighbours, such as the Turkana of Kenya and the Toposa of Sudan, who at that time possessed superior weapons. The Turkana in particular used *ngamichiro*, locally produced single-shot firearms, as well as modern weapons that they had acquired from Ethiopia and Somali fighters of the Shifta War in Northeastern Kenya (1963-67).²⁴ During this period, local police, as is the case today, were unable or unwilling to protect the Karamojong from external raids involving small arms. In addition the police prevented a large-scale armament of the Ugandan pastoralists, which would have equalized the regional balance of power.²⁵ The massive de-stocking of cattle as a result of the raids left a bitter memory amongst the Karamojong:

Everybody out there thinks the Karimojong are trigger-happy individuals who use the gun to intimidate their neighbours. Nobody seems to remember when we were virtual captives in our own homes, rendered totally helpless by the Turkana who had guns while we only had spears. From the 1950s through to the late 1970s, the Turkana wreaked havoc in this region. They took away all our cattle, leaving us destitute, and at the mercy of hunger and famine. The government could not protect us from them (the Turkana). They would attack our homes, take away our cattle and force us to watch as they raped out wives and daughters. It is only when we got guns that we were able to stand up to the Turkana and other neighbouring communities, and to avenge the humiliation we had suffered for ages at their hands.²⁶

By 1973, the situation was desperate enough that the Matheniko clan, precariously situated between the Jie, Pokot and Turkana, began the production of home-made weapons

²⁴ Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Timeline*, Gawayo Tegulle, "Why should we arm the Iteso?" *The New Vision*, 12 April 2000.

²⁵ The District Annual Report 1969 states that most Karamojong were disarmed in 1968 after the government mounted a major weapons confiscation operation that year. Ocan, "CBR Working Paper No.20," pg55.

²⁶ Interview with Philip Ichumer, KISP Chairman and Co-ordinator, Namule County in Kennedy Mkutu, "Pastoral conflict and small arms: The Kenya-Uganda border region," (London: Saferworld, 2003), pg13, Michael Ochieng Odhiambo, "Karamoja Conflict Study: A Report to Oxfam GB in Uganda," (Kampala: Oxfam GB, 2000), pg21.

called *ngamitidai*, using them to raid the Pian and Bokora.²⁷ During this period, schools were broken into and boreholes were destroyed for the metal tubing, which was fashioned into gun barrels by local artisans.²⁸ By 1975, the Bokora clan also started to fabricate *ngamitidai*, however they remained outgunned by the joint forces of the Turkana and Matheniko until the early 1980s, when they raided a Ugandan military transport that had been sent to Karamoja to respond to Iteso hostilities.²⁹ Until the mid-1970s, the Karamojong acquired modern firearms by ambushing their better-armed neighbours, after which time, they began to mount increasingly audacious attacks on isolated police outposts, culminating in an assailing of the Nabilituk police headquarters.³⁰ The inter-clan violence that commenced in the 1970s violated a previous norm against inter-Karamojong raiding and has resulted in an additional layer of conflict in the region, often resulting in alliances amongst the various sections of the Karamojong with external tribes.

Although the Karamojong did not play a role in Idi Amin's government, his ousting by the UNLA and TPLF forces had major consequences for the region. As Amin's regime collapsed in the south of Uganda, his soldiers stationed in Moroto fled to the north and east, abandoning the armouries in Karamoja. In their haste to avoid the advancing enemy, these soldiers traded, sold, or had their weapons stolen.³¹ Meanwhile, the pastoralists (primarily the Jie, Matheniko and Tepeth) realized that the armouries in Kotido and Moroto were no longer guarded and looted them of their weapons.³² By the time the UNLA and TPLF troops arrived from the south, several weeks later, both armouries had been completely emptied of their

²⁷ Gray, "We were running, running," pg28, Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Timeline*.

²⁸ Sylvester Onyang, "UPDF miss bull's eye in Karamoja: 500 killed as modern weapons arm old cultures," *The Monitor*, 22 September 1999, pg29, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg5.

²⁹ Gray, "We were running, running," pg30.

³⁰ Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts", pg6, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg5, Tegulle, "Why should we arm the Iteso?"

³¹ Anthony Clayton, *Frontiersmen: Warfare in Africa since 1950* (London: UCL Press, 1999) pg107, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg5.

³² Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg254, Mustafa Mirzeler and Crawford Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda: AK-47 as change agent," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38, no. 3 (2000): pg416-17.

estimated 12,000 guns (mainly G-3s).³³ This massive and immediate flood of firearms destabilized power relations within the pastoralist communities of the Karamoja cluster, between the Karamojong, and their agricultural neighbours. This also contributed to the rise of legendary warlords such as General John Loteng and Apa Loris, and intensified the scale and frequency of cattle raids into neighbouring districts.³⁴ Those who did not benefit from the looting of the armouries, such as the Dodoth and Bokora, suffered a major strategic disadvantage and were subjected to significant de-stocking by better-armed communities.³⁵

Two years after the fall of the Amin government, the victorious parties quarrelled and a new rebellion was launched in February 1981, pitching Yoweri Museveni's People's Resistance Army (soon to be the National Resistance Army [NRA] comprised mainly of southerners) against the mostly northern Acholi and Langi UNLA forces of Milton Obote's second government. The UNLA forces would themselves split in 1984-1985, which led to a coup d'état by Tito Okello, an Acholi. This resulted in a second looting of the Moroto armoury.³⁶

By this point in time, Uganda ceased to exist as a functioning state. No one military or political organization controlled the legitimate use of force. The NRA occupied most of the west and south west of the country, and attempted to consolidate its power in the centre and southern areas of Uganda. The UNLA was divided by tribal cleavages, but still controlled Kampala and other urban areas. In Southern Sudan, Amin's remaining soldiers regrouped,

³³ Paulo Wangoola, "Cattle Rustling and Conflicts in N.E. Uganda: Views and Perspective Reported by Ugandan Papers, 1989-1999" (paper presented at the Brainstorming Workshop on Cattle Rustling and Conflicts in North Eastern Uganda, Mbale, Uganda, 25-28 October 1999), pg4.

³⁴ Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts", pg6, Okwara, "Family, Women and Children in the Context of Insecurity", pg4-5.

³⁵ Gray, "We were running, running," pg33, Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda," pg417, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg3.

³⁶ Helen de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," (Oxford: Environment and Development Group, 1999?), pg2, E.A. Mworozzi and A.W. Ntende, "Livestock rustling, small arms and ethnic conflict: Cattle Rustling in Karamoja Region, North-Eastern Uganda" (paper presented at the conference Improving Human Security through the Control and Management of Small Arms, Arusha, 23-25 March 2000), pg81.

trading some of their weapons with local residents.³⁷ Meanwhile, the Karamojong who were entirely marginalized during the rule of Obote II, profited from the political chaos by launching massive raids in Teso, Lango and Acholi homelands from 1983 to 1985.

During this period, the UNLA/Okello attempted to recruit some of the Karamojong through promises that they shall "recover their lost cows" from neighbouring districts. However, when the NRA defeated the UNLA, many of the Karamojong deserted with their AK-47s, and fled back to their region.³⁸ By January 1986, the NRA government had ascended to power, and the Karamojong acquired an increasing number of weapons from fleeing UNLA soldiers. The large proliferation of guns within Ugandan society, in combination with a distinct lack of control of the security situation by the state or any one centralized armed force, permitted new waves of cattle raids, not only by the Karamojong, but also by undisciplined UNLA and NRA/M soldiers and leaders.³⁹ As a result, this led to a very complex situation of bitter memories between the various communities and the present government.

Despite the consolidation of a relatively stable government since the NRM came to power in January 1986, inter and intra-community cattle raiding and rustling in Karamoja and into neighbouring districts have continued. Although the NRM government has attempted to disarm the Karamojong several times, it is believed that the number of weapons circulating in the region continues to increase, from an estimated 15,000-35,000 in 1998 to approximately 86,000 just prior to the 2000 disarmament exercise.⁴⁰ Moreover, the types of weapons have grown from SMGs (sub-machine guns) and assault rifles such as the AK-47, G-3, SLR (self-

³⁷ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* pg193, Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda," pg416-18.

³⁸ Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg254-55, Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts", pg7, Mworozzi and Ntende, "Livestock rustling, small arms and ethnic conflict", pg81, Okwara, "Family, Women and Children in the Context of Insecurity", pg5, Wangoola, "Cattle Rustling and Conflicts in N.E. Uganda: Views and Perspective Reported by Ugandan Papers, 1989-1999", pg4.

³⁹ Ochyengh, "A Case Study of Cattle Rustling in Teso", pg7-8.

⁴⁰ UPDF estimates in 2000. "Karamoja disarmament: price of political & economic failures," *Uganda Confidential*, 17-23 March 2000, Wangoola, "Cattle Rustling and Conflicts in N.E. Uganda: Views and Perspective Reported by Ugandan Papers, 1989-1999", pg4.

loading rifle) to more powerful firepower including LMGs (light machine gun) and even RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenade).⁴¹ These larger weapons have little utility with regards to traditional raiding activities (which requires stealth, speed and involves close combat), and have strategic disadvantages such as being heavy (despite being named LMG), and have a tendency to have a lower accuracy rate. These heavier weapons indicate a qualitative escalation in the type of violent conflict from raiding activities to behaviour more closely associated with warfare. As a result of the high level of small arms proliferation, the casualty rates have increased and remain high; an estimated 30 Karamojong die every week in inter-clan clashes alone, and gunshot wounds are recorded by medical staff as the single greatest cause of adult male mortality in Moroto District.⁴² The improving quality and volume of armaments amongst the Karamojong has also engendered an increasingly forceful military response from the state. In one incident in September 1999, the UPDF killed over 500 people using helicopter gun ships, tanks and heavy artillery when they attempted to "pacify the Karimojong and recover stolen military equipment".⁴³ The militarisation in the northeast is reminiscent of colonial times; since 1997, when Karamoja was declared a military zone, the army has shouldered the bulk of the responsibility of providing security in the area. The local police restrict themselves to criminal investigations in urban areas; they have only 186 officers, six vehicles, and three radios to police a geographical area the size of Belgium.⁴⁴

Whilst governments in the East African region prefer to blame the circulation and proliferation of weapons on criminal elements and problems in neighbouring countries, including ongoing conflicts in the DRC, Southern Sudan and insecurity in Rwanda, Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia, the current situation in Karamoja can also be linked to the NRM's ambiguous gun control policy. Uganda's tumultuous past and its geo-political

⁴¹ Onyang, "UPDF miss bull's eye in Karamoja: 500 killed as modern weapons arm old cultures."

⁴² "K'jong need more than apologies," *The Monitor*, 21 August 2000, Oxfam UK, "Conflict's Children: the human cost of small arms in Kitgum and Kotido, Uganda," (Oxford: Oxfam UK, 2001), pg16.

⁴³ Nathan Etengu and Grace Matsiko, "The Karimojong should be tamed," *The New Vision*, 22 September 1999, Sylvester Onyang, "Karimojong warriors only doing UPDF's dirty job," *The Monitor*, 25 September 1999, Onyang, "UPDF miss bull's eye in Karamoja: 500 killed as modern weapons arm old cultures."

⁴⁴ Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts", pg7.

location have complicated the task of the NRM, however it appears that the de-militarisation of Ugandan society has not been a priority of the current government. In 1986, the NRM came to power having armed 40,000 former civilians, and by the early 1990s the ranks of the NRA had swelled to 100,000.⁴⁵ Various government 'self-help' policies have contributed to the widespread proliferation of guns, and a prevailing positive attitude towards gun ownership. These include village Defense Secretaries, Mchaka Mchaka, and Local Defense Units (LDUs). Under the Local Council system, established in 1994, each village chairman (LCI) elects a Defense Secretary, who is then armed by the state to protect the local residents. Theoretically, firearms are strictly licensed in Uganda, however, in recent years, a general firearms training programme for civilians (Mchaka Mchaka) was introduced in the name of self-defence and community protection. This has evolved into an ad hoc policy of recruiting and arming of local militias when the UPDF became over-stretched. These Local Defence Units have gained increasing popularity. In the Lango region alone, an estimated 10,000 men and women are being recruited into the 'Rhino Group' to fight against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).⁴⁶ In Katakwi District, the 'Arrow Group' is comprised of 6,000 ex-guerrillas, demobilized soldiers, girls and other citizens. The LDU in Katakwi recruits anyone willing to use a gun and endure one month training by the army.

Uganda has a troubled political history of tribal militias, which raises several questions such as: How sustainable are these emergency measures, given that these LDUs are not paid? Will the LDUs be demobilized once the LRA is defeated or will they be incorporated into the regular forces, as they have been in the past? Will they be used against non-rebel threats, such as the Karamojong rustlers? What is the long-term impact of auxiliary forces in Ugandan society? These questions are not within the scope of this study, however

⁴⁵ Although in recent years the government has been forced to reduce the armed forces due to foreign aid conditionality. Sam Tulya Muhika, "National and Regional Security: Civilians under firearms, the rise of uncivil society in Uganda 1894-2000" (paper presented at the conference Improving Human Security through the Control and Management of Small Arms, Arusha, Tanzania, 23-25 March 2000), pg66.

⁴⁶ James Palmer, "Ugandan villagers on front lines," *The Toronto Star*, 11 January 2004.

they would provide useful insight into the policy of community-based security systems, which is advocated by the present government.

In general, it is questionable to whom the state is providing security. Both the Karamojong and their tribal neighbours do not view the centralized state as fulfilling its duty to provide adequate internal and external security. For example, in 1999 a panic in the surrounding districts occurred when the armed Karamojong moved into neighbouring areas, as a result of a massive crop failure. The LC5 Vice-Chairman of Kapchorwa, Samuel Ngiro asked the government to provide the district with two thousand guns to protect the local residents from Karamojong raiders, "...because security provision was one of the President's promises to the people of Kapchorwa during the Presidential elections...This is not to balance forces, but to ensure security of our people which is at stake."⁴⁷ From the Karamojong point of view, "These cows are today here because of these guns and boys. To remove those guns means the end of our survival unless all our neighbours also surrender theirs but even the government gun has never been safe for the Karamojong", a Matheniko elder explained.⁴⁸ Both the Karamojong and their neighbours associate weapons with a self-help strategy and the best means of achieving security, notwithstanding the government.

Given a past history of unstable regimes in Uganda, the NRA/M, for their part, has clearly indicated that threats to the state take priority above human (in)security. Brigadier Chefe Ali, a former Commander of the 3rd Division (responsible for Karamoja and the Northeast) explained that in the mid-1980s "Perhaps the only 'mistake' the army made was that it chose to confront rebels and preserve national stability instead of fighting cattle rustlers and letting the rebels create national instability. Of course, cattle rustling is a criminal offence

⁴⁷ Muzungyo, "Referendum: Kapchorwa wants guns," *The New Vision?* November 1999.

⁴⁸ Lowakabong, Matheniko elder. "Security in Grazing Areas and Villages" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg9.

but rebellion against an established government is not only criminal, but also treasonable.”⁴⁹

During this period, the NRA was fighting a litany of rebellions simultaneously, including the Holy Spirit Movement (Acholi), the UPDA (Acholi) the UPA (Teso) the Cel-ibong (Lango) and the LRA.⁵⁰ These concerns remain prescient for the NRM government even today. In an interview in 2000 with the Minister of State for Karamoja, Peter Lokeris, a Ugandan reporter asked: “Why can’t the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) just return from Congo and put its own house in order?” Lokeris replied, “The Congo thing is about threat to state security by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels. But this conflict here [Karamoja and neighbouring districts] is an internal one. When we finish the war in Congo, the UPDF will return and position itself.”⁵¹

It is quite probable that the NRM government has never viewed the Karamoja as a direct threat to the state or government. While many Karamojong had previously fought on the side of the opposition Tito Okello and the UNLA, in recent times, the Karamojong have been overwhelming supporters of the NRM, in contrast with the neighbouring district of Soroti.⁵² Despite a consistent history of resisting government pacification, the Karamojong have never attempted to overthrow a regime through armed rebellion, unlike their northern brethren the Acholi, Iteso and Langi. Thus, the Karamojong are not prioritized or viewed as a threat in the eyes of the centralized state, but are viewed as a public nuisance to be dealt with in an ad hoc manner, especially during election periods. The NRM government has tacitly condoned the possession of small arms in Karamoja and had for years tolerated the public display of such weapons until 1999, under the pretence that the state could not protect the

⁴⁹ Chefe Ali, "Preaching Peace Against War" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg3.

⁵⁰ Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement, Basilio Okello's Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), Peter Otai's Uganda People's Army (UPA), Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Ibid., pg2.

⁵¹ Tegulle, "Why should we arm the Iteso?"

⁵² de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg2, Joshua Kato, *What Determined Voting Patterns* (New Vision, 26 February 2006 [accessed 27 February 2006]); available from: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200302271195.html>, Gaaki Kiambo, *Academics Assess Election Outcome* (The Monitor, 5 March 2006 [accessed 6 March 2006]); available from: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200603060387.html>, Milton Olupot, *Why Teso Voted Against Museveni* (28 February 2006 [accessed 10 March 2006]); available from: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200602280800.html>.

Karamojong from their pastoralist neighbours in Kenya and southern Sudan.⁵³ This double standard has been criticized severely by neighbouring people as being unfair, and in no small measure has contributed to the perception that the state is unequal in its dealings with northern communities.⁵⁴

This criticism by surrounding agricultural communities against the Karamojong is justified, as the Karamojong have been historically opportunistic and strategically astute in the raiding of their neighbours, striking most severely when state armed forces have been occupied by a rebellion or collapsing regime. The NRM government received support from the Karamojong on numerous occasions, when the Karamojong fought against anti-government elements including the UPC and Lakwena rebels in 1991 and the LRA in 1994, when Joseph Kony's forces began receiving major arms supplies from Khartoum. In the earlier instances, the Karamojong were rewarded by the NRM government with guns and ammunition, contrasting sharply with messages about disarmament.⁵⁵ A Bokora elder, Paulo Lokadio, criticized the government's ambiguous gun policy during a meeting with Karamojong MPs in 1999 regarding plans for peaceful disarmament in the district. "You are talking about removing our guns not knowing that you will give way for Kony to walk over and capture power. Have you forgotten that we restrained Kony rebels from attacking government?"⁵⁶ It should be noted that Karamoja is a strategic gateway to the south for the LRA, as the most direct route through Soroti is full of marshland. The Karamojong have a reputation as fearless warriors, respected even by the LRA. As a result, the pastoralists have been instrumental to the government's containment of Kony's forces to the north. Thus, one could conclude that while cattle raiding was a political concern, the NRA/M have made a strategic calculation that the de-stocking of northern districts by Karamojong rustlers was a small price to pay for state security over the past twenty years.

⁵³ Sylvester Onyang, "Our guns protect Museveni-K'jong," *The Monitor*, 24 October 1999.

⁵⁴ North and East Lecturers and Students Association (NELSA) in Uganda Tertiary Institutions, 23 January 1994.

⁵⁵ Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg257.

⁵⁶ Onyang, "Our guns protect Museveni-K'jong."

A report by the British NGO Oxfam succinctly summarises the impact of the increased militarisation of Karamojong society since independence:

Not only have guns come to define the way the Karamojong relate with their neighbours, but it has also come to define the way the Karamojong live amongst themselves. It has redefined social and political relations within the community; and is also the major factor mediating the relations between the Karamojong and the government of Uganda.⁵⁷

Social mutation: new sources of authority, new values and rules

As has been demonstrated, while the Karamojong were largely marginalized from centralized political power, the past forty years of post-independence Uganda has had a major impact on Karamoja. Many changes have been internal to their society, hidden from mainstream knowledge. Some authors such as Mirzeler, Young and Ocan believe Karamojong society is undergoing a social revolution, with the rise of new figures of authority, rules, and values that primarily affect youth. These changes are the cause of significant tension within pastoralist societies.

Many NGOs, such as the Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, have pointed to a high bride wealth (relative to other neighbouring communities) as conflict causing both within families and between communities.⁵⁸ Besides raising the necessary cattle for bride wealth, raiding is a means of achieving recognition of adulthood for young men; it is also considered a responsibility to replenish the family/father's herd; or as one author remarked, the *karacuna* becomes "a virile protector of the tribe and family".⁵⁹ However, there is a tension in this acquisition of status, for the *karacuna*, like other youth wishes to assert his independence from his father. Through raiding, the young men are able to accumulate wealth and cattle, fulfilling their own needs for marriage and economic self-sustenance. Some youths become professional raiders rather than tend to the cattle of their father's herd. Lokui, a notorious

⁵⁷ Odhiambo, "Karamoja Conflict Study," pg21.

⁵⁸ Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on the Social and Economic Effects of the Karamojong Conflict on Both Karamoja and the Teso Regions," (Kaufo, 2003), pg24, 35.

⁵⁹ Ruben de Koning, "What Warriors Want: Young Male Perspectives on Armed Violence, Peace and Development in Najie, Karamoja" (paper presented at the Conference on Controlling the demand for Small Arms: the search for strategies in the Horn of Africa and in the Balkans, The Hague, Netherlands, 8-10 December 2003), pg97.

raider in Jie county explains: "We use the gun to defend ourselves and some get rich...I'm willing to stop, yes, but I want to marry and have money to buy things just like you and the other people in town".⁶⁰

Many Karamojong elders claim gun possession has resulted in their youth becoming more arrogant and aggressive.⁶¹ They lament the lack of respect from the younger generations of men with regards to their decision-making authority on important matters such as raiding, grazing, conflict resolution with other tribes. As explained by one journalist "...in the not so distant past, custom dictated that when planning a cattle raid, warriors had first to consult with a diviner or receive the blessings of the important elders. In contemporary Karamojong society however, the gun has made the warriors both the decision makers and executors."⁶² At the heart of the matter, weapons have accelerated and rendered the process of acquiring status and wealth, in the form of cattle, largely unpredictable in Karamoja society. Charles Ocan, a researcher on pastoralism explains:

Once again there is ardent conflict between the elders and the war-leaders. There is total disrespect of the will and power of elders in favour of the will and power of weapons. Possession of weapons and a retainer army is now the major determinant of authority. Age is virtually a very insignificant factor...The accumulation by the new leaders, the war-lords, is largely through cattle raids. However, the instability of cattle ownership makes their wealth risky and their position fluid.⁶³

Ocan hypothesizes that "because cattle have become so fluid and risky to possess, people turn cattle wealth to 'women wealth' by marrying several partners as a type of cattle security".⁶⁴

The uncertainty of individual cattle ownership enables some men to enter into multiple marriages, while reducing the likelihood of others to marry at all. Research by scholars of other related pastoralist societies, reinforces this finding. The anthropologist, Bruch Due, in his study of the Turkana and Pokot tribes in Kenya observed that the priority of some men

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 99.

⁶¹ Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg33.

⁶² Curtis Abraham, *The East African*, 17-23 March 1997, pg2.

⁶³ Charles Emunyu Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis and Social Change in Karamoja," in *Uganda: Studies in living conditions and popular movements and constitutionalism*, ed. M Mamdani and J. Oloka-Onyango (Kampala: JEP Books, 1994), pg140.

⁶⁴ Charles Emunyu Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda: The Changing Significance of Cattle Raids," (Kampala, Uganda: Centre for Basic Research, 1992), pg31.

was to marry additional wives rather than save up for the bride wealth of their sons. By delaying his sons' weddings for as long as possible, and marrying off his daughters, the father gains the ability to accumulate bride wealth and fulfils his polygamous ambition.⁶⁵ The number of wives varies, although six co-wives for a rich man is not unusual, and one study recorded a case in which a man had 24 wives.⁶⁶ This increasing strain on father-son relations has been noted as a cause of the rising number of cases of parricide reported in Karamoja.⁶⁷

While bride wealth and cattle ownership may be the cause of disputes leading to fractured homesteads and the premature division of family herds, out of the different social groups interviewed, only the *ngikaracuna* (youth warriors) advocated for smaller bride wealth.⁶⁸ As demonstrated above, senior men have a greater interest in higher bride wealth, as it eases competition with younger men for wives. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the women and elders are virulently against any change in the custom of bride wealth. During multiple interviews, they referred to the traditional function of the bride wealth as a form of social safety net, which is shared amongst their kin and friends: "Paying the bride price is the responsibility of the whole family and community. It is the equivalent of education; it benefits everyone".⁶⁹ Women, in particular, mentioned that large amounts of cattle were essential to feed their family. (It has been estimated that 6 heads of cattle per person are needed to satisfy alimentary needs.⁷⁰) Despite being one of the most vulnerable groups during a raid, the women refuted any link between high bride wealth and the need for the *ngikaracuna* to raid.

⁶⁵ One interviewee noted that cases of parricide are not unheard of due to the frustration of young men who want to marry, but receive no support from their father, as he continues to marry other women himself. Interview with NGO 4.

⁶⁶ Alison Lochhead, "Gender and Development in Dodoth County, Karamoja, Uganda," (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 1990), pg10.

⁶⁷ Nathalie Gomes, "Women, peace building, security and development in the Karimojong cluster" (paper presented at the Conference on Controlling the demand for Small Arms: the search for Strategies in the Horn of Africa and in the Balkans, The Hague, Netherlands, 8-10 December 2003), pg87.

⁶⁸ Interview with women from Kamor Parish, Panyagara sub-county 20-10-03; Nakongumutu-Loposa Parish, Panyagara sub-county 18-10-03; Rupa Parish, Rupa sub-county 25-11-03.

⁶⁹ Interview with CIV 7.

⁷⁰ Bruno Novelli, *Aspects of Karimojong Ethnosociology*, vol. 44, *Museum Combonianum* (Verona, Italy: Novastampa, 1988) pg101.

The young men in Karamoja, have complained there are few economic options other than cattle rustling. Very few children, especially in rural areas receive a formal education, and 91% of male children of primary school age do not attend school.⁷¹ The youth are disempowered economically and socially, and there is little hope of acquiring wealth as a result of the precariousness of owning cattle. Some businessmen and warlords have capitalized on the lack of job opportunities and the marginalisation of the young men to employ the cattle-less youth as thugs and raiders, promising them security and livestock.⁷² As a consequence, the commercialized armed cattle rustling has provided many *ngikaracuna* with the means to obtain luxury goods they see in town, such as Western goods, clothing, ornaments and bottled or locally brewed beer.⁷³ This has the distorting effect that the weapon, which is actually owned by the family (or groups of brothers), brings benefits to the individual *karacuna* who uses it and claims ownership of the gun. For example, a young man in his effort "to show off his generosity and sophistication...and to celebrate a kind of soldierly camaraderie", will share his purchases with his fellow warriors and women he may be courting. "These forms of exchange, ...not only exclude older men from the social content of the transactions, but also eliminate their wives and children in the settlement communities from the benefit of customary exchange relationships which they enjoyed before the arrival of AK-47s."⁷⁴ Until recently, the motives for raiding by the Karamojong were mostly geared towards community survival and reproduction, and thus were controlled by the elders through social norms. Neighbouring tribes, who were materially better off at the time, were targeted

⁷¹ This figure rises to 94% for the girl child. Gimono Wamai and Tom Barton, "Women, Adolescent and Children in the Context of Insecurity: An extract from the Uganda National Situation Analysis" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994).

⁷² Association for World Education-Uganda National Chapter, "Summarized Report of the Research Findings on the Transformation of Cattle Rustling and Conflicts in North-Eastern Uganda,," (Mbale, Uganda: AWE-UNC, 2000), pg13. Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg27.

⁷³ de Koning, "What Warriors Want: Young Male Perspectives on Armed Violence, Peace and Development in Najje, Karamoja", pg96. Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda," pg421.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 422

for raiding, but this process of re-stocking was reciprocal.⁷⁵ In contrast, at present, many of the raids are motivated by individual accumulation, resulting in increasing social and economic differentiation in the Karamojong society. This has changed for the following reasons. Firstly, cattle that are rustled and then sold cannot be reciprocally raided between clans, as was the case in the past. Secondly, the spoils of raids are distributed less within the community. As a result, the impoverishment of some families has increased significantly, and has led to greater numbers of destitute and casual wage labourers from amongst the cattle-less.⁷⁶ Growing trends of prostitution, migration to other districts, trafficking of children, and excessive drinking have also been observed.⁷⁷

Some African analysts, such as the sociologist Josiah Osamba, have argued that Westernization and the incorporation of the pastoral communities into the market economy have provoked a transformation of values, as observed in the changing motives for raiding and the shifting of authority from elders to warrior-youth.⁷⁸ The erosion of traditional social institutions that had controlled violence in earlier times, combined with a noticeable and prolonged absence of strong institutions of governance to take the place of the traditional sources of authority, has resulted in an inter-generational breakdown in Karamojong society. It has given rise to a new breed of *ngikaracuna* youth who act in their own interests, based on their own values, uncontrolled by their elders.⁷⁹

Commercialization of cattle raiding

As explained above and in the previous chapter on Pastoralism and the Colonial State, cattle raiding is viewed as an acceptable custom in Karamojong society, which in previous

⁷⁵ Saverio Kratli and Jeremy Swift, "Understanding and Managing Pastoral Conflict in Kenya: A Literature Review," (Sussex, UK: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 1999), pg9.

⁷⁶ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg7.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "New forces of contention between the elders, who control the permanent settlements, and the warlords, who control the cattle camps and raids." Ocan p65, CBR Working Paper 20. Ocan, "CBR Working Paper No.20," pg65, Joshia O. Osamba, *Peace building and Transformation from below: Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation among the Pastoral Societies in the Borderlands of Eastern Africa*. (African Journal in Conflict Resolution, No. 2, 2001 [accessed 8 Sept 2003]); available from: <http://www.accord.org.za>, Joshia O. Osamba, *The Sociology of Insecurity: Cattle Rustling and Banditry in North-Western Kenya*. (Africa Journal in Conflict Resolution, No.1, 2000 [accessed 8 Sept 2003]); available from: <http://www.accord.org.za>.

⁷⁹ This phenomenon has been observed and studied in other conflict areas, such as Sierra Leone. Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rainforest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey, 1996).

eras was linked primarily to communal re-stocking strategies in times of need, or natural resources access between communities. However in the past fifty years, new actors, motives, and practices of rustling have emerged, often in tandem with the socio-cultural tradition of raiding, thus confusing the debate surrounding cattle raiding.⁸⁰

In recent times, there has been a trend of increased commercialization of cattle raiding that has benefited individuals, as opposed to the community as a whole. This phenomenon, at its origin, can be linked to the disjuncture between the function of chiefs and state bureaucrats, and the notion of leadership in Karamoja society. During the colonial era, British officials attempted to import a centralized notion of authority to the Karamoja region during their period of administrative rule. As a result, the post of local chiefs was created, and district administrators governed Karamoja with the aim of fulfilling bureaucratic objectives, such as maintaining peace and collecting taxes.⁸¹ According to C.P. Welch, a British researcher writing on this subject in the 1960s, "They derived their authority by virtue of various acts of Parliament and not by popular consensus of the Karamojong...the great mass of Karamojong still maintain a commonly held value system that posits that the appropriate behaviour of leaders is to secure the right of all to possess cattle. They still maintain that an appropriate means of achieving this end is raiding."⁸²

Welch, hypothesized that this created a paradoxical situation, where district administrators and chiefs were under pressure from the central government to stop raiding, but were faced with demands by their local constituents to assist with raids, thus resulting in a self-interested mentality among these colonial officers. The chiefs and administrators presented a common front to 'outsiders' by protecting one another, and assuming a double

⁸⁰ I will attempt to distinguish between 'raiding' and 'rustling', where 'rustling' denotes stealing cattle for commercial purposes, and 'raiding' for all other purposes. Though, the distinction between the two is not always so clear.

⁸¹ The post-colonial Ugandan state did little to modify these responsibilities. Part III, sub-section 29 of the Administration of Karamoja Act states "It shall be the duty of the administration in cooperation with the Government to the best of its ability to assist in preventing the commission of any offence, to assist in the arrest of any offenders and to assist in the restoration of any property unlawfully obtained...including measures for the payment of compensation for loss of life or property caused by cattle raids..." *The Administration (Karamoja) Act*, Chapter 26.

⁸² Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg203-04.

discourse depending on whom they were addressing. Not surprisingly this led to widespread corruption among these officials. In 1965-66, the Ugandan government established the "Blood Money Committees" to process district claims resulting from incidences of raiding, however no guidelines for the compensation claims or inspection procedures to check the claims of various individuals were provided.⁸³ Thus, a common practice developed in which a district authority would file a claim of loss on behalf of a local tribesman for cash compensation from the district administration. However, this claim would be inflated, and the official would pocket the difference. By 1968, the central government recognized that this practice was widespread. The Office of the Commissioner of Police reported: "It would appear that blood money claims are not always accurate and reports of cattle theft are more often than not exaggerated. Consequently raids are encouraged."⁸⁴ As a result, several district authorities in Karamoja, including parish and county chiefs, clerks, security guards and even the Administrative Secretary, were suspended or disciplined by the District Service Committee for cases involving cattle rustling in 1968.⁸⁵ This led the then Minister of Defense, Felix Onama, to declare during a Parliamentary debate on the Blood Money Committees, that rustling "...is becoming a trading organization to enrich certain people, because the loot is often shared by people who have got high standing in the administration."⁸⁶

During the Idi Amin regime from 1971 to 1979, a new actor in the cattle rustling business emerged. Amin's army in Karamoja gained a reputation for effectively and brutally pursuing raiders and re-capturing stolen livestock. However, a pattern developed in which much of the stolen livestock was never returned to their rightful owner. Instead, the confiscated animals were sold to local cattle traders.⁸⁷ Local civil servants with insufficient salaries were also complicit in the illegal trade in stolen stock, intervening as middlemen and

⁸³ Ibid. pg206.

⁸⁴ Ibid. pg208.

⁸⁵ Ibid. pg202.

⁸⁶ Ibid. pg206.

⁸⁷ Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg4.

sharing the profits with the soldiers. During this period, Amin's forces significantly de-stocked the region of its cattle wealth to an extent that the army was considered another 'raiding tribe' by the Karamojong.⁸⁸ While undisciplined soldiers were often accused of skimming confiscated cattle during colonial times, the nature and purpose of Amin's army involvement in rustling was significantly different. The motive behind rustling was not the immediate meat consumption for the soldiers, but rather the illegal procurement of a supply of cattle for sale in urban centres. It also differed from the corruption of the Blood Money scheme, in that representatives of the state were directly involved in the military-commercial enterprise of rustling. For the Karamojong and their neighbours, the army involvement in raiding was not only restricted to Amin's regime; reports of 'exportation' by UNLA soldiers of up to 10,000 heads of cattle from Karamoja to Kampala surfaced during the regime of Obote II.⁸⁹ More recently, the NRA was accused of "passive complicity or direct involvement in cattle rustling" in Lango and Teso during the early years of the present government.⁹⁰ And the UPDF (the present Uganda Army) has fielded many accusations of theft in Karamoja, leading to the removal of senior officers stationed in the region.⁹¹

This widespread corruption has seriously altered how the state is perceived by both the communities that are raided, and by the rustlers themselves. The Karamojong continue to view the state with suspicion and distrust; they say, "Government eats our cattle."⁹² For the pastoralists, the state represents a foreign actor with whom they must struggle, not work in cooperation. The Karamojong and the neighbouring tribes sense that at the national level, the state is incapable or unwilling to stop inter and intra-community raiding, posing some questions about the legitimacy of governance. Local residents express little confidence in the

⁸⁸ Fr. Mario Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" (Postgraduate Diploma Thesis, University of Wales, Swansea, 1979) pg92-93, 136, 39, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg185-95, 202.

⁸⁹ Hooper and Pirouet, "Uganda," pg15., Ochyengh, "A Case Study of Cattle Rustling in Teso", pg7.

⁹⁰ Ali, "Preaching Peace Against War", pg2, Omongole Ogwang Anguria, "Disarming the K'jong: Another Kaguta joke," *The Monitor*, 19 March 2000.

⁹¹ Milton Olupot, "Museveni summons MPs from Karamoja," *The New Vision*, 8 April 2000, Sylvester Onyang, "Why K'jong guns are still smoking in Kotido," *The Monitor*, 1 November 1999, "UPDF accused of cattle rustling," *The People*, 16 August 2000.

⁹² Neville Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) pg236-39, Novelli, *Aspects of Karimojong Ethnosociology* pg150.

institutions of the state, such as the police or military. Government forces are often perceived to favour some groups over others by either failing to take decisive action or by taking selective action according to whom has been raided.⁹³ At the local level, some community leaders and government officials in Karamoja are suspected of sheltering rustlers or even providing them with ammunition in exchange for a percentage of the loot or to settle old political grudges.⁹⁴ One district leader in Teso claims:

The Kraal leaders of Karamoja are the ones who can bring peace in this area. It is like a myth to think of the Karamojong as backward, as it is water that is the main problem of Karamoja. Some of the toughest thieves are living around Mt. Napak...The Karamojong are clever and their leaders know what they are doing. The large herds of cattle in Karamoja are owned by very few people who employ and arm the warriors to loot our cattle. These kraal heads later sell off the loot.⁹⁵

Others in the community believe that the kraal leaders are allowed to perpetuate these kinds of attacks with the complicity of powerful businessmen and individuals in government. The involvement of political leaders is an aspect of cattle rustling that is still quite taboo to this day, although occasionally local residents are sufficiently outraged that accusations are publicly uttered. For example one angry citizen stated during a conference: "You (our NRC members) are the beneficiaries of the underdevelopment of Karamoja. I know some of you are here because you represent cattle-rustlers. You are their covers."⁹⁶ In other instances, it appears that government chiefs and local councillors have shown an unwillingness to report mobilizations of warriors or criminal activities to district or military authorities for fear of reprisals, out of loyalty to their own tribes, or because they have not been paid and are not

⁹³ Onyang, "UPDF miss bull's eye in Karamoja: 500 killed as modern weapons arm old cultures."

⁹⁴ Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg40, Chebet Maikut, "Cattle Raiding in Kapchorwa District" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg6.

⁹⁵ The kraal leaders are customary leaders within the pastoralist communities. The kraals are moveable centres where the cattle are kept during grazing. Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences of Armed Conflict: 1987-2001," (Kampala: Isis-WICCE, 2002), pg73.

⁹⁶ At the time National Resistance Council (NRC) members were the local political representatives, equivalent to today's Local Councillors. William H.A. Longole-Obonyo, "Napore sub-county" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg4.

loyalty to their employer, the state.⁹⁷ It is quite probable that the impunity given by political benefactors has emboldened the enterprise of rustling within the Karamojong society.

From a broader perspective, the commercialization of cattle raiding can be linked to the poor economic, social and political integration of Karamoja, with the rest of Uganda.⁹⁸ Karamojong society and its barter economy have been increasingly exposed to capitalism; however the majority of Karamojong are poorly equipped for this transition. On a small scale, it is increasingly common for individuals from urban centers who are linked to the market system to “steal from rural areas and quickly sell the animals to middlemen in town.”⁹⁹ However, warlords and businessmen have benefited the most from the structural changes within the pastoral economy as a result of their links to networks of livestock traders in East Africa,¹ because “The commercialization of cattle enables people who are not herders to profit from livestock raiding.”¹⁰⁰ Businessmen with wealth now have the ability to hire rustlers for their firepower and their skill as raiders. This has resulted because of the differing levels of wealth in society, and the introduction of wage-labour. These businessmen use their connections to warlords to hire the warriors and criminal elements in neighbouring districts.¹⁰¹ Through market forces, namely the commercialization of livestock, weapons and labour, cattle capital is accumulated through military strength in a cyclical process. This has had the result of simultaneously impoverishing those who are marginalized from the process of the conversion to a market economy. Two researchers studying this phenomenon, Saverio

⁹⁷ Ocan, "CBR Working Paper No.20," pg53-55, David Pulkol, "Karamoja Inter-county Raids and Road Insecurity: The Leadership Crisis. The case of Bokora and Matheniko Counties (1989-1991)," (Kampala, Uganda: 1991), pg6-7.

⁹⁸ A similar phenomenon has been observed in marginalized pastoral areas of Kenya. Kratli and Swift, "Understanding and Managing Pastoral Conflict in Kenya.", Management Systems International, "Assessment and Programmatic Recommendations: Addressing Pastoralist Conflict in the Karamoja Cluster of Kenya, Uganda and Sudan," (Washington DC: USAID/REDSO, 2002), Mkutu, "Pastoral conflict and small arms."

⁹⁹ Catherine Bond, "Ugandans Flee Cattle Raiders, Attacks Launched from Karamoja District," *The Guardian (London)*, 17 April 1986, pg2.

¹⁰⁰ Kratli and Swift, "Understanding and Managing Pastoral Conflict in Kenya," pg9, Osamba, *The Sociology of Insecurity*.

¹⁰¹ J. Oloka-Onyango, Gariyo Zie, and Frank Emmanuel Muhereza, "Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation in Karamoja: Report of a Workshop," (Kampala, Uganda: Centre for Basic Research, 1992), pg8, David Pulkol, "Karamojong Cattle Rustling, A National Dilemma: Myths and Realities" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg7.

Kratli and Jeremy Swift explain that “The combination of commercialization of livestock and professional raiding enables those who are in a position of control at both levels to access not only animals, but the whole range of pastoral resources (labour, animals, land and water) with a degree of control and a freedom of movement far beyond the predatory dimensions.” Commercialization of cattle rustling perpetuates the accumulation of cattle wealth and power of the rich and well-connected, to the detriment of society as a whole. This in turn, only increases the pool of young men willing to be hired as ‘retainers’ (rustlers).¹⁰²

The nature of these cattle raids vary from highly organized professional operations involving the use of lorries to transport stolen cattle to the marketplace, to undisciplined rampages which end in rape, death, and destruction of property.¹⁰³ More organized large-scale attacks involving hundreds of cattle are perpetrated during the daytime, which indicates that significant resources have been mobilized that reflect external collaboration and assistance beyond what would normally be available to the *Ngikaracuna* youth.¹⁰⁴ The increase of these professional raids, may be the cause of a cascade of “smaller, less equipped, extemporaneous” raids by tribal sections in an effort to re-stock rustled herds, which has resulted in the escalation of inter-sectional violence and increasing impoverishment of the pastoralists.¹⁰⁵ Very little is known about the inter-action between these two types of raiding and their actors, as most literature tends to portray traditional raiding and commercial cattle rustling as dichotomous entities. However, it is reasonable to hypothesize that because the Karamoja have not been fully integrated into a market economy, and the *ngikaracuna* are not completely socially ostracized, that there still exists significant links between raiding and rustling. While the criminalisation of cattle rustling is recognized by the state and by the local community, very little distinction is made in the press between organized criminal gangs of rustlers and groups of Karamojong warriors. Thus, other factors for increasing incidences of

¹⁰² Osamba, *The Sociology of Insecurity*. p7.

¹⁰³ Emmanuel Akelem, "Oh these savage warriors!" *The New Vision*, 22 May 2000, Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg27, 30, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Oloka-Onyango, Zie, and Muhereza, "CBR Workshop Report No.1," pg14.

¹⁰⁵ Kratli and Swift, "Understanding and Managing Pastoral Conflict in Kenya."

raiding, such as reduced access to grazing land, drought, stock epidemics etc., become overshadowed by the effects of large-scale commercial cattle rustling in the national debate on the 'Karamoja Question'.

Growth of the population and degradation of the environment

In the post-independence period, Karamojong society has endured many changes that favour the proliferation of firearms. This includes the evolution of their social and cultural institutions, and the rupture of the political and strategic equilibrium between the clans, and with neighbouring tribes. An additional element in this equation has been the progressive deterioration of their physical environment, the strategies of pastoralists to survive this ecological degradation, and the policy responses of successive Ugandan governments.

A variety of sources, both indigenous and administrative, have documented significant changes in the ecology of Karamoja over the past hundred years.¹⁰⁶ W.D.M. Bell, the famous elephant hunter of the late 19th century described Karamoja as "...a lovely park-like country-lush grass everywhere with isolated tamarind trees covered with fruit", "...a stretch of country that is quite waterless in the dry season", but with "game-infested plains" including lions, hyenas, elephants, giraffes, and zebras.¹⁰⁷ In the 1950s, Karamojong elders described eastern Matheniko and Jie counties, Pokot areas and the Kidepo valley as "white country", or that covered with grass. In his 1962 historical survey on *The Soils of Karamoja District*, a colonial agricultural officer, J.G. Wilson concluded, "There is abundant evidence that 40 years ago much of Karamoja was such a grass savannah."¹⁰⁸ However, by the late 1960s, it was observed that the vegetation of the district was beginning to degenerate from savannah to steppe, and from steppe to thicket. This latter type of vegetation is characterized by "woody shrubs, small trees and succulent herbs" and replaces the perennial and annual grass cover of savannah and steppe environments. Thicket, which is widespread in the eastern part of

¹⁰⁶ This publication by the Centre for Basic Research provides the best summary of sources on this topic. M Mamdani and P.M.B. Kasoma, "Karamoja: Ecology and History," (Kampala, Uganda: Centre for Basic Research, 1992).

¹⁰⁷ W.D.M. Bell, *Karamoja Safari*, 2nd ed. (Suffolk, UK: Neville Spearman Ltd, 1984) pg107,15,30,32.

¹⁰⁸ Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg10.

Karamoja, is only appropriate forage for browsing animals such as goats; grazing animals such as cattle cannot feed on this type of vegetation.¹⁰⁹

This change in vegetation significantly impacted on the quality and composition of soil, which has affected the ability to retain rainfall and sustain water-sensitive plant cover (such as grass). The evolution of vegetation from savannah towards thicket has led to more areas of bare soil that are exposed to the elements, which has resulted in compacted soil and sheet erosion of fertile topsoil.¹¹⁰ Academics all share the conclusion that the pastoralists themselves are complicit in the deterioration of their habitat. However, anthropologists, development economists and political scientists disagree about what caused the pastoralists to over-graze their land.¹¹¹ Early anthropologists, believe that pastoralists were more conservative and resistant to change than mixed or fully agricultural societies because they had a 'cattle complex', or "an intensity of values which privileged cattle above all else".¹¹² More recent work dismisses the irrationality of the 'cattle complex' by arguing that pastoralism is the best and most logical form of land use in a harsh environment. Some, like the anthropologist Neville Dyson-Hudson, believe in a combination of the culture-ecology argument.¹¹³ Others, such as Peter Hopcraft, argue that pastoralism is an example of the 'tragedy of the commons':

In pastoral situations where land is held communally and there is neither a fee nor a quota for grazing, each herder rationally and unambiguously maximizes the number of animals, even if aggregate production from the range, and therefore the welfare of all the herders who depend on it, would be substantially improved by reducing the stock rate...communally held resources tend to be overused and misused from the point of view of society.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pg9.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Due to space constraints I will not examine each complex argument in detail, but will provide the broad arguments as they are relevant to understanding state policies on development for pastoralists.

¹¹² The term 'cattle complex' was coined by the anthropologist M.J. Herskovits in 1926. Peter Rigby, "Pastoralism and Prejudice: Ideology and Rural Development in East Africa," in *Society and Social Change in Eastern Africa*, ed. Peter Rigby (Nairobi? Nkanga, 1970?), pg4.

¹¹³ Neville Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society: The Karimojong of Northeast Uganda," in *Black Africa: Its Peoples and Their Cultures Today*, ed. John Middleton (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), pg74.

¹¹⁴ Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg14.

Regardless, the deterioration of the local environment and change of vegetation is significant because it has exposed the Karamojong society to greater stress such as the frequency of famine, and has pushed them farther into grazing lands in neighbouring districts.

The understanding of pastoralism as problematic, especially the 'cattle complex', are extremely prevalent in the national political discourse in Uganda, and have greatly influenced government policy towards the Karamojong, both during the colonial and post-colonial period.¹¹⁵ This has led one scholar to state, "The world of pastoralism has been problematic for the post-colonial nation-states of East Africa, as it was for the colonial administration as well. Pastoralists, and the cultural and economic parameters of their existence, have been misrepresented, misunderstood, and indeed marginalized by nation-states."¹¹⁶ Indeed, the most convincing analyses of the situation in Karamoja is from Kasoma, Mamdani and Ocan; they argue that pastoralism in and of itself is not inherently ecologically unsustainable, but rather the misinformed notion of pastoralism amongst administrators and politicians has led to inappropriate policies, which the pastoralists have attempted to circumvent. Mamdani and Kasoma observed "The history of Karamoja reflects that all subsequent governments have looked at the Karimojong people not as victims of a disparaging socio-ecological anomaly but, largely, as a cause of that anomaly. Not as part of Uganda, but as a 'frontier'."¹¹⁷ In 1964, the government decreed that pastoralism threatened wildlife and their habitat, that they gazetted large tracks of grazing land, which included the Matheniko and Bokora Corridor, and the Pian-Upe game reserves - representing just over 25% of the total land area in Karamoja.¹¹⁸ This action followed earlier laws enacted in the 1940s and 1950s, which created forest reserves and Kidepo National Park. By the early 1990s, in theory, 36% of the total land

¹¹⁵ For example, upon commission Dyson-Hudson produced a report for the British colonial government entitled "The Present Position of the Karamojong" in 1958, regarding the basic nature of Karamojong society and politics, and the effectiveness of government policy in the district. Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg81.

¹¹⁶ Mario I. Aguilar, "Pastoral Disruption and Cultural Continuity in a Pastoral Town," in *Rethinking Pastoralism in Africa: Gender Culture and the Myth of the Patriarchal Pastoralist*, ed. Dorothy Hodgson (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), pg250.

¹¹⁷ Ocan, "CBR Working Paper No.20."p62.

¹¹⁸ Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22.", p47

area of Karamoja was gazetted as government land, with the intent of protecting wildlife and forests, while the remaining 64% was designated as a Controlled Hunting Area. This system of protected areas caused great resentment amongst the Karamojong as they allege they were not consulted.¹¹⁹

Subsequent governments in Uganda have indicated that the underlying philosophy of these policy initiatives was to protect the flora and fauna from the local residents, who they assumed were incapable of sustainable development. However, the policies used to undermine local community control over managed resources were self-fulfilling prophecies of the 'tragedy of the commons'. According to an environmental expert, "To detach natural resources from community control is to compel communities either to forego resources on which they have a historical claim and right or – more likely because they have no alternative resource – to plunder it in the short run in a predatory (and 'illegal') fashion."¹²⁰ In local interviews, a Non-Governmental Organization, the Karamoja Wildlife Management (KWM) Project discovered that the pastoralists viewed the local wildlife as 'government cows.' When the government's Game Department fled in 1979 due to insecurity in the region, many wild animals were hunted to near extinction, because their 'owner had left'. "The killing of wild animals went on because nobody was caring for them. We asked whose 'cows' they were and nobody knew, so we took them."¹²¹ The KWM Project summary states "The Karimojong have little sense of nationhood and far less any desire to protect something that is for the benefit of a national government who, they feel, has done so little for them."¹²² Similarly, the reduced land available for grazing has encouraged unmanaged resource use amongst the pastoralists.

In addition to gazetting the protected areas in the Karamojong region, the government of Uganda encouraged the most fertile areas of the region to expand their agricultural

¹¹⁹ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg3.

¹²⁰ Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg47.

¹²¹ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg9.

¹²² Ibid., pg17.

production through policies such as the introduction of the ox-plough in the late 1950s and experimental farms. As a result, the present day areas around Kaabong, Kotido, Kangole, Namalu and Nabilatuk are extensively cultivated.¹²³ The response to the government's reduction of grazing land did not result in the pastoralists adopting a more sedentary lifestyle. Instead, it has led to additional use of coping strategies such as further seasonal migration out of Karamoja, and the over-use of existing natural resources. For example, in the mountain-dwelling section of the Karamonjong region, the Tepeth, responded to the gazetting by deforesting mountain slopes in order to gain access to new pastures (leading to a drop in the surrounding water table).¹²⁴ Another example includes over-grazing common pastures by not allowing them to lay fowl.

Uganda's economic policy for the Karamoja region during the transition period from British independence (1961-1966) did not differ greatly from previous development plans. In fact, post-independence government water policies exacerbated the environmental problems even further. Dam construction continued in the western plains; encouraging the commercialization of livestock and circumventing the need of the pastoralists to migrate out of district in search of dry-season pastures. The government's Economic Plan of 1961-66 stated, "We recommend that the particular investments be allocated on the basis of the economic contribution that particular dams or tanks make to the cattle output of an area."¹²⁵ By 1966, the dams fell into disfavour with the government planners because the dams were thought to have accelerated the process of desertification. A similar logic underpinned The Valley Tank Programme of 1966-71, which involved the planning of artificial watering points that were not based on ecological security and sustainability, but rather on economic and strategic considerations.¹²⁶ According to the missionary Fr. Mario Cisterino, in "Co-

¹²³ Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg10.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p36-7

¹²⁵ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg26.

¹²⁶ Frank Emmanuel Muhereza and Charles Emunyu Ocan, "Report of the Second CBR Pastoralism Workshop on: Pastoralism and Crisis in Karamoja," (Kampala, Uganda: Centre for Basic Research, 1994), pg5, Welch, "Pastoralists and Administrators in Conflict" pg181-85.,

ordination with ranching development, water tanks are primarily for cattle ranching schemes". The government's 1977-1980 Three Year Economic Rehabilitation Plan, merged the aims of the tanks and dams with other water facilities such as boreholes "as a means of encouraging stable rural settlements and economic activities based on agriculture and livestock industries."¹²⁷ The idea that water is the panacea to pastoralism is deeply engrained to this day. The current government emphasized this point in its political manifesto: "The Ten Point Program highlighted the resettlement of (the) Karamojong people. It was envisaged then, that provisions of water to the largely arid Karamoja, would be a crucial solution to the Karamoja people to abandon their nomadic life. A Karamoja Development Agency was set up in 1987 and funds for this effort were mobilized."¹²⁸

The effects of these and other water provision programmes without long-term environmental planning were threefold. Firstly, they accelerated the process of desertification. As a result of the rapid evaporation of surface water in Karamoja, natural water catchments do not last very long in any one place, which force the herds to move in search of water and pasture.¹²⁹ In contrast, consistent watering points encouraged people to settle for longer periods than the grasslands could bare. This resulted in over-grazing and the trampling of vegetation, and the deterioration of both the plants and soil. In urban areas, the drilling of multiple boreholes has resulted in the lowering of the underground water table.¹³⁰ Secondly, the construction of tank, dam and boreholes increased the population level of both cattle and human, beyond the carrying capacity of the land. The provision of artificial sources of water, especially in dry season areas, encouraged pastoralists to increase their stock for sale, beyond the carrying capacity of the wet season rangeland. As a result, the regeneration of annual grasses did not occur, and caused the spread of bush and thicket. Thus, cattle which

¹²⁷ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo".

¹²⁸ Government of Uganda, "Revised Fifteen Point Program," (Entebbe: Uganda Government Printers?), pg38. J. Francis Otai, "The Karamoja Question and Development" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg4.

¹²⁹ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg16, 21.

¹³⁰ Ibid. pg30.

were left to feed the young and the elderly often suffered from inadequate pasture in areas close to the permanent settlement.¹³¹ However, the Karamojong's increased access to water and healthcare has had a positive effect on both the overall health and sanitation of the pastoralists, and has contributed to a steadily increasing population¹³² Up until the early 1960s, the growth in the human population was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of cattle. However, ecological constraints in addition to other factors such as large scale raiding have caused a massive drop in cattle herd sizes.¹³³ In real terms, the number of stock per capita continues to fall, engendering greater food insecurity in the region. Thirdly, the provision of water has altered the strategies of the pastoralists to cope with their environment. Paradoxically, these artificial watering points have encouraged the cattle herders to remain in close proximity, while the damaging effects of desertification have pushed them further a field in neighbouring districts in search of pasture for their stock.¹³⁴ Thus, the overall effect has been the disruption of the seasonal migratory patterns within the Karamoja region through the loss of grazing grounds and artificial watering points, which has led to unsustainable and uneven concentrations of cattle stock.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the deteriorating ecological conditions in Karamoja in combination with the inability of the pastoralists to cope with periodic crises, were reflected in the increasing tendency and voracity of raids between clans, and into neighbouring agricultural communities. A chronology of the most serious ecological shocks corresponds to the cycle of increasing inter and intra-communal conflict in the north-eastern region, and consequently to the various attempts at disarmament. These include: droughts in 1967-68, 1974-75, 1979-81, 1984, 1990-94, 1999-2000; epidemics affecting cattle or human

¹³¹ Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg52.

¹³² Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg31., Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg18.

¹³³ Sandra Gray, Paul Leslie, and Helen Alinga Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," in *The Last of the Nomadic Herders*, ed. W.R Leonard and M.H. Crawford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, draft version), pg21-22, Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts", pg6, Mamdani and Kasoma, "CBR Working Paper No.22," pg18.

¹³⁴ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo" pg31.

populations, such as rinderpest 1968-69; cholera 1971, 1980; east coast fever 1998; and famine in 1974, 1980, 1985, 1993, 2000. Anthropologist John Markakis argues that conflicts among pastoralists have taken on a new and exaggerated dimension due to a shrinking resource base. It has provoked a desperate struggle for survival in which the existence of some groups is threatened.¹³⁵ Within Karamojong society, not everyone has been affected to the same degree "By the mid-1980s, a large, impoverished underclass in Karamoja existed that had virtually no access to the pastoral sector, and had become chronically vulnerable to food shortages and dependent on international donors for economic assistance and food aid."¹³⁶ Those with political or economic connections profited, while the vast majority depended on *akimor*, mutual assistance between clan members and/or humanitarian aid.¹³⁷ Thus, one can agree with Ocan's conclusion that "natural catastrophes do not have an equal impact on a population; in a way they benefit some in terms of obtaining cheap labour and land, while causing destitution to others through loss of stock and land."¹³⁸ To support this idea, since the great famine of 'Akore' which took place in 1980, where 21% of the total population died of famine-related causes, the Karamoja region became a food deficit area, often dependant on World Food Program assistance.¹³⁹ Since this time, the majority of pastoralists face an increasingly precarious situation of declining productivity as a result of declining access to adequate grazing land and water, the increasing desertification of territory within Karamoja, poor community resource management, and inappropriate government policies favouring de-pastoralisation. This environmental crisis and the response that it

¹³⁵ J. Markakis, ed., *Conflict and the Decline of Pastoralism in the Horn of Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1993) pg13.

¹³⁶ Gray, Leslie, and Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," pg23.

¹³⁷ Ocan, "CBR Working Paper No.20," pg59.

¹³⁸ Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in North-eastern Uganda," pg14.

¹³⁹ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg6, Gray, Leslie, and Akol, "Uncertain Disaster: Environmental Instability, Colonial Policy and the Resilience of East African Pastoralist Systems," pg15, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg2, Will Ross, *Guns and drought in Karamoja* (2003 [accessed 18 February 2003]); available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/2777059.stm>, "Uganda: Feature - Vicious circle of famine and insecurity in Karamoja," *IRIN*, 24 March 2003.

engenders within pastoralist communities is not widely understood or discussed in the national debates surrounding the Karamoja Question.

Conflict with neighbouring districts

The potential and incidences of armed conflict in and around Karamoja have augmented as the environmental, political, social and strategic situation has deteriorated in recent decades. Unfortunately, in the post-independence era, relations have not improved between the state, the Karamojong and their neighbours. The relationships between these groups continue to be characterized by mutual distrust and a lack of communication, with increasingly tragic results.

Considering the current conflict between the pastoralists and their neighbours, it is interesting to note that ethnographically, the Iteso, and Sebei tribes originate from the same Nilo-Hamitic grouping as the Karamojong and Jie, and were also previously pastoralists. The agricultural Langi and Acholi tribes are more distantly related through their Nilotic origins.¹⁴⁰ These communities, by nature of geographic proximity have had relations that included trade, inter-marriage, mutual use of resources, war, and reciprocal cattle raiding. At the beginning of the 20th century, pastoralist communities were considered relatively wealthy and flourishing. This had changed by the end of the British period in the early 1960's, when the process of differentiation began to have noticeable effects. While their Iteso cousins had successfully adopted settled agriculture, notably cotton, the Karamojong tribe suffered from the effects of forced cattle marketing, and being physically restricted from the rest of Uganda. In contrast, free cattle markets in neighbouring districts, such as Ngenge market in Kapchorwa flourished during this period.¹⁴¹ The consequences of the creation of administrative boundaries were also problematic because they aggravated communal identities and a sense of territoriality as frontiers largely coincided with different tribes and

¹⁴⁰ Other Ugandans mainly originate from two other distinct language families: the Bantu and Central Sudanic. Hooper and Pirouet, "Uganda," pg5., Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences," pg14.

¹⁴¹ Maikut, "Cattle Raiding in Kapchorwa District", pg6.

clans.¹⁴² Restricting the movement of the pastoralists further exacerbated inter-communal conflict. For example, in parts of the Usuk area (Soroti district) a border dispute reoccurred between the Karamojong and Iteso; this area prior to colonization was previously shared as a common grazing ground.¹⁴³ Overall, the Karamojong viewed themselves as victims of marginalisation by the colonial state, and the continuation of British policy towards the pastoralists after independence did little to rectify their historical grievances of unequal treatment in comparison to their neighbours.¹⁴⁴

As noted previously, the cultural practice of cattle raiding by the Karamojong has existed between communities since their common migration from Abyssinia in the 18th century. During the colonial and early post-colonial period, the (Karamojong) raids were largely accomplished with traditional weapons of spears, and bows and arrows, As a result, no one particular group had a strategic advantage over the other. Raids involved fewer numbers of cattle and often took place at night on neighbours who were in close geographic proximity.¹⁴⁵ Inflicting casualties were discouraged by a blood money fee of 60 up to 150 head of cattle per victim, which was charged to the community as a whole.¹⁴⁶ This situation changed dramatically after the looting of the Moroto and Kotido armouries in 1979, and the effects of the regional drought and famine. The scale, scope, and frequency of raids into neighbouring districts increased significantly as a result. For example, during the 1960s, district officials in Kapchorwa recorded over 50 raids by the Karamojong which involved the deaths of 500 persons, and resulting in approximately 8,200 stolen cattle. During the peak of the raids in the 1980s, these figures had ballooned to approximately 300 raids, netting 68,000 cattle and resulting in the death of 1,520 local residents.¹⁴⁷ The humanitarian impacts of

¹⁴² Pulkol also mentions the re-adjustment of administrative boundaries, which gave the Iteso and Sebei parts of grazing territory traditionally used by the Karamojong. Pulkol, "Karimojong Cattle Rustling, A National Dilemma: Myths and Realities", pg22.

¹⁴³ "Security in Grazing Areas and Villages", pg4.

¹⁴⁴ Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg23.

¹⁴⁵ Okwara, "Family, Women and Children in the Context of Insecurity", pg3.

¹⁴⁶ Maikut, "Cattle Raiding in Kapchorwa District", pg4.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pg3-4.

these raids provoked a massive internal displacement (IDP). Some of the current IDP camps in Katakwi and Soroti districts originate from the notable attacks of 1979-80.¹⁴⁸

In the absence of a functioning centralized state in 1979, the occupying Tanzanian force, the TPDF, set up 'Home Guards' or tribal militias to protect local populations in Teso. This policy was expanded to Kitgum, Lira, Soroti, Kumi, Mbale, and Kapchorwa by the Obote II government. The home guards, joined by the police and various army units, including Special Forces and Tracker Forces, attempted to thwart increasingly audacious raids, including daylight attacks, by pursuing raiders and launching retaliatory operations in Karamoja.¹⁴⁹ These counter-raids served to exacerbate already hostile relations between communities, resulting in tit-for-tat attacks and the punitive disarmament of Karamoja in early 1984. The disarmament was not successful, however the combined military operation was responsible for the displacement of up to 75% of the population in Southern Karamoja, as well as the destruction of homesteads, granaries, cattle and crops.¹⁵⁰ By the end of 1984, the combined effects of drought and the disarmament operation had led to a quintupling of food prices in Karamoja, leading some residents in the district to suspect that the pastoralists were being starved into submission.¹⁵¹

Uganda's change of government in 1986 improved the strategic situation of the Karamojong. Led by Southerners, the NRM government disbanded and disarmed the tribal militias and Special Forces who had largely supported the Obote or Okello regimes.¹⁵² As a result, the pastoralists resumed their raiding activities in Teso with a vengeance, condoned by NRA government forces who either stood by or who were occupied by other rebellions in the north. The combined retrenchment of Iteso security personnel and the popular cause against the Karamojong welled into anti-NRM sentiment. In its initial phase, the Teso Insurgency

¹⁴⁸ Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences," pg18.

¹⁴⁹ Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts", pg6-7.

¹⁵⁰ The Iteso, Langi and Acholi home guards participated in the disarmament of the Karamojong. Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg254, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg2.

¹⁵¹ Hooper and Pirouet, "Uganda," pg15.

¹⁵² Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences," pg16.

benefited from widespread grassroots support. The government's failure to stem cattle raiding by the Karimojong was construed as state complicity with the pastoralists to rid the Teso of their cattle.¹⁵³ These sentiments are still popularly expressed in the national media in Uganda and by Iteso community leaders. Commonly asked questions are: "Why is the government sacrificing the Iteso? Why are the Karimojong allowed to carry guns used to terrorise Iteso and other neighbouring tribes? Is it an agenda by Government? Why should the Iteso suffer in order to enable the Karimojong (to) survive?"¹⁵⁴ After the five year rebellion ended in 1992, the Iteso community continued to call President Museveni "Emulalot" (Ankole herdsman) "who connived with Karimojong to deny them their right of livelihood and economic base, as long as Karimojong return to Teso, raid, rape, kill and destroy people's crops with impunity."¹⁵⁵

President Museveni's reputation in the agricultural communities neighbouring Karamoja suffered in early 1994, when a political firestorm broke out in the press regarding the establishment of Local Defense Forces (LDUs) in Karamoja. The government was accused of providing the Karimojong warriors with guns and ammunition, and allowing them the political privilege to possess weapons.¹⁵⁶ This claim was true; the Karimojong de facto enjoyed legal immunity from the national firearms legislation, and were armed by the state. This was part of a new Ugandan government policy on auxiliary forces that resulted because of changing regional circumstances; in 1994, the LRA began to receive major shipments of arms from the government in Khartoum. As a result, the government hoped to contain the flow of LRA rebels by blocking their transit (into Karamoja) by using the LDUs.¹⁵⁷ Unbeknownst to the general public, 'vigilantes' or local militias had been organized in the north-eastern districts since 1992, as a community-based program. In the 1980s and early

¹⁵³ Ibid., pg16-17.

¹⁵⁴ Felix Osike, "Karimojong guns raise dust: Speaker after speaker called for the immediate disarmament of the marauding warriors," *The New Vision*, 18 March 2000.

¹⁵⁵ Anguria, "Disarming the K'jong: Another Kaguta joke."

¹⁵⁶ North and East Lecturers and Students Association (NELSA) in Uganda Tertiary Institutions.

¹⁵⁷ Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda," pg419.

1990s, the security situation in the Karamoja region continued to deteriorate to the point where Non-Governmental Organizations withdrew their personnel due to road attacks. In response, the Moroto District Council appointed a Secretary of Security who began to organize the vigilante program, which was supported by the Catholic Church and NGOs.¹⁵⁸ Initially, these local militias consisted of ten men per parish, for a total of 900 in Moroto district; women were also recruited as intelligence gatherers. The men were voluntarily recruited based on two criteria: firstly, they had to already own a gun (the local council would not provide one); secondly, they had to be recognized as a local leader in their community.¹⁵⁹ In the early years of these militias starting in 1992, these vigilantes were widely credited with securing the main roads from armed bandits,

By 1994, domestic pressure on President Museveni to act on the unstable political and military situation in Karamoja mounted. During a visit to the region, he agreed to support the LDUs in Karamoja, if they would come under the command of the army, in particular, Col. Felix Guti, a Karamojong who was appointed Commander of the 3rd Brigade, Moroto Division. This legitimized the local militia in Karamoja in the eyes of the government. The LDUs in Karamoja, like in other neighbouring districts, would receive special uniforms, 10,000 Ush/month (approximately \$10 USD), and their weapons were to be registered with a commander at every geo-political level (village, parish, sub-county, district).¹⁶⁰ The number of LDUs was also expanded to 1000 men per county, for a total of 5,000 men in Moroto and 3,000 men in Kotido. The women who previously acted as intelligence gatherers, were not retained, as the government stated that they only wanted those with a gun and "how can a woman have a gun?".¹⁶¹ This initiative successfully reduced the number of armed raids; some

¹⁵⁸ The NGOs and Church provided blankets, food and shirts for the vigilantes, who were not paid. Peter T Lokeris, "Preaching and Practising Peace Against War" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg3-4, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg6.

¹⁵⁹ Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg6.

¹⁶⁰ Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral politics in the northeast periphery in Uganda," pg419, Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg7.

¹⁶¹ Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society," pg7.

say it was too successful, for the Minister of State for Karamoja, David Pulkol and Col. Guti were eventually replaced.¹⁶² By the end of 1996, the LDUs were disbanded and replaced by Anti-Stock Theft Units (ASTUs), which fell under the Minister of Internal Affairs.¹⁶³ One prominent local resident recalls:

When Guti left, the ASTU stopped getting paid. Other army commanders were given the role of commanding the ASTU, but money started disappearing. The ASTU were forgotten. The army was too corrupt, so the command of the ASTU was given to the police. But there was the same problem of corruption. People kept quiet because the corruption went to the highest levels of command.¹⁶⁴

Later, the government courted controversy, when the Iteso ASTUs were taken to serve in the UPDF in 1998, leaving Katakwi district unprotected. Two years later, in March 2000, major Karamojong raids left nearly 90,000 people (one third of the entire district population) seeking refuge in Internally Displaced Persons camps in Katakwi district.¹⁶⁵ This subsequent political crisis directly resulted in the 2001-2002 weapons collection program.

As a result of the NRM government's inability to stop the Karamojong raiding, the general perception (outside of Karamoja) is that the central government in Kampala condones the proliferation of weapons for pastoralists. As such, public discourse has mainly centred on the debate of arming neighbouring districts.¹⁶⁶ Increased militarisation is viewed as the best option to contain the Karamojong, and there is an atmosphere of mutual distrust and miscommunication between the conflicting parties.¹⁶⁷ The Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, Peter Lokeris said in 2000, "there was a feeling among the Karimojong that the tribes who had been armed were determined to destroy them and grab their cattle."¹⁶⁸ Only three

¹⁶² Interview with NGO 6, OTHER 3, REP 6.

¹⁶³ Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg257.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with REP 5.

¹⁶⁵ Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences," pg6.

¹⁶⁶ Akelem, "Oh these savage warriors!", Etengu and Matsiko, "The Karimojong should be tamed.", R. Kabushenga, "Karamoja: Uganda's ticking time bomb," *The Sunday Vision*, 25 June 2000, Eric Lakidi, "Bishop blasts govt over guns," *The New Vision*, 8 April 2000, "Lokeris warns on arms," *The New Vision*, 6 April 2000, Muzungyo, "Referendum: Kapchorwa wants guns.", Dusman A. Okee and Oketch Pitek, "800 LDUs to fight K'jong," *The Sunday Monitor*, 9 April 2000.

¹⁶⁷ Levi Ochieng, *Karimojong Terror* (13 August 2001 [accessed 2 October 2004]); available from: <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/20082001/Features/Magazine3.html>, Albert Oduman, "NRM govt trading guns for votes?" *The Monitor*, 12 April 2000.

¹⁶⁸ "Lokeris warns on arms."

days later he elaborated on his previous statement and claimed that, "Museveni denied that government was arming other tribes against the Karamojong. He said that the supply of guns was intended for people to defend themselves in case of an attack."¹⁶⁹ The political reality is that the twelve districts surrounding Karamoja are a voting bloc that the NRM government could not afford to ignore. According to the Uganda analyst, Odiambo:

Unfortunately for the Karamojong, the agriculturalists have a much larger political clout, as they constitute a bigger political constituency at the national level. Moreover, their position resonates well with the general social and political trends in the rest of Uganda. The Karamojong on the other hand, are an absolute social and political minority, project a lifestyle that few people within Uganda understand or sympathise with, and are victims of stereotypes that are informed by lack of understanding of the nature of their life.¹⁷⁰

With regards the historical grievances of the Karamojong, there is surprisingly little discussion in the national press, on the 'root causes' of their conflicts. Primarily, this can be contributed to a poor understanding of pastoralism and why the Karamojong have continued to depend on livestock as a mode of production and economic livelihood. The idea of the 'cattle complex' is predominant in critiques of the pastoralists, and explanations of why they raid. The following is an example given by a resident of a neighbouring district: "These are reckless acts of savagery perpetrated by primitive and backwards brutes who do not see any economic value in cattle except the foolish satisfaction of simply counting numbers and gazing at them."¹⁷¹ Many in the general public and in the ruling class believe that "The Karamojong are the one community in Uganda that has eroded the centralized powers of Law Enforcement Agencies and have become obsessed with the belief that they are unreachable and untouchable."¹⁷² Primarily, the Karamojong are perceived to be the basic problem; and there is very little disaggregation of who is committing the raids and attacks. Such an attitude

¹⁶⁹ Okee and Pitek, "800 LDUs to fight K'jong."

¹⁷⁰ Some observers warn that government inaction may lead to civil disobedience or insurgency amongst affected communities. Isis-WICCE, "Medical Intervention Study of War Affected Teso Region, Uganda," (Kampala: Isis-WICCE, 2002), pg35, Odiambo, "Karamoja Conflict Study," pg28.

¹⁷¹ Ochyengh, "A Case Study of Cattle Rustling in Teso", pg8.

¹⁷² Mr. Francis Wanyina, Office of the President, Uganda. Vanessa A. Farr, "Proceedings of the Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons Issues in Uganda: Dynamics, Concepts and Perspectives for Action" (Jinja, Uganda, April 14-17 2002), pg11.

implies that the solution to the Karamoja Question can only be initiated externally. The rhetoric by political leaders and the press is quite inflammatory on all sides of the conflict. The opinion expressed in this newspaper editorial is typical, "Government should stop treating the Karimojong cowboys with kid gloves. The moral for the African seems to be, to change him, you need brutal force."¹⁷³ One local NGO, CECORE has recently begun training Ugandan journalists in non-biased and conflict reducing reporting in an effort to stem the propaganda on both sides.¹⁷⁴

When discussing this complex and multi-dimensional situation, many unconstructive suggestions have appeared in the mainstream media such as: "Karamoja should be isolated from the rest of Uganda, nothing can be done to change them", "They should be wiped out or assisted to finish each other off", "They should be tamed, assisted to integrate and develop", "We shall not wait for Karamoja to develop" etc.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, there has been little discussion surrounding initiatives between the Karimojong and their neighbours, which would result in a peaceful co-existence and the sharing of natural resources. The most promising initiative on this front was the signing of the Magoro Agreement in September 1998. This agreement specified the modalities of how the pastoralists were to arrive and depart during the dry season grazing in Katakwi district. In essence, it was an agreement between the neighbouring tribes on 'good neighbourly behaviour' and the penalties for 'bad behaviour', such as destroying crops or raiding cattle. These rules were agreed to by the people and local authorities of Katakwi, Moroto and Kotido districts at security meetings held at Kapelbyong and Magoro. Despite the fact that two Ministers representing the Ugandan government were present at these meetings, in 2002 the Magoro Agreement was declared unconstitutional by the Attorney-General and the Chief Magistrate of Katakwi for contravening the Uganda Penal Code.¹⁷⁶ A customary agreement, such as the Magoro

¹⁷³ Zadok Ekimwere, "What if K'jongs raided Kisozi and Rwakitura?" *The Monitor*, 25 May 2000.

¹⁷⁴ Personal communication with Rose Otieno, 15-10-2003.

¹⁷⁵ Pulkol, "Karimojong Cattle Rustling, A National Dilemma: Myths and Realities", pg2.

¹⁷⁶ Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," pg258.

Agreement, could be an effective means of regulating the interaction between the Karamojong and their neighbours, and addressing any eventual grievances.

There are several possible motives to explain why the Karamojong have persisted in raiding and rustling cattle from neighbouring communities. Many have been covered within the narrative of this chapter, however, they are worth reviewing. Firstly, *anthropological or cultural accounts* suggest that the Karamojong as pastoralists have “Indifference bordering on contempt for the cattleless” and that “all foreigners are alike in that the Karamojong acknowledge no obligation towards them.”¹⁷⁷ While this may have been true at the time of independence, since then, many Karamojong themselves have become cattleless or are in contact with non-pastoral communities, including those who were forced to migrate out of Karamoja as a result of food insecurity. This explanation interprets pastoralism as inherently conservative and unable to evolve. Other authors have suggested that the pastoralists’ need for mobility or their understanding of resource access continues to encourage them to conduct raids. According to the environmentalist de Jode the Karamojong believe that “Wildlife, like land and like all natural resources, belongs to God and correspondingly to everyone. It is not for one person, but can be used by anyone.”¹⁷⁸ However, communal ownership of natural resources is often not recognized in a world, which is organized by frontiers and bureaucracy. “It is not uncommon to go grazing beyond printed map boundaries, as these mean nothing to the people. For them (an) external boundary is the strong organized refusal of other tribes, mainly the Acholi, Langi and Iteso, to let them go too far into their land.”¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, the pastoralists resent the restrictions on their movement into other districts, noting that they are the only tribal group to whom these barriers apply.¹⁸⁰

Secondly, *environmental factors*, such as increasing desertification (changing vegetation and lack of water), declining access to grazing rangelands, frequent drought, and

¹⁷⁷ Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* pg235.

¹⁷⁸ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg17.

¹⁷⁹ The original source is not cited, quoted in "Security in Grazing Areas and Villages", pg4.

¹⁸⁰ Katakwi Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg26.

the central government's responses to this environmental degradation have forced the Karamojong to migrate further into surrounding neighbouring communities. In times of epidemics and drought, the cattle raiding of wealthier communities allowed pastoralists to communally re-stock. While it is true that the Karamojong are facing an environmental shock, in which their eco-system is degrading and appears to regularly encounter crises, today the vast majority of Karamojong do not benefit from large-scale rustling activities in neighbouring districts, as in the past. This was a more convincing argument to explain raiding activities in the 1970s and early 1980s. In recent times, environmental factors, coupled with the commercialization of cattle raiding have led to the impoverishment of the vast majority of the pastoralist population, and the enrichment of a select few.

Thirdly, the Karamojong gained major *strategic advantages* in firepower over their neighbours, throughout the chaos of the post-independence period. In particular, many thousands of small arms were looted during the seizure of the Moroto armoury after the fall of Idi Amin. These guns tipped the strategic balance in favour of the Karamojong. Furthermore, in the early years of the NRM government, the pastoralists took advantage of the Teso Insurgency and NRA preoccupation with other rebellions to raid their neighbours without sanction or punishment from the central government. Furthermore, some warlords and their retainer armies are protected by powerful businessmen and politicians, both at the local and national level.

Fourthly, *political and economic marginalisation* both during the colonial and post-colonial period, have greatly influenced Karamojong attitudes towards the state and their neighbours. One Karamojong elder succinctly stated, "Our people do not feel like part and parcel of the Ugandan nation. We are not treated as such by the rest of Uganda, and in turn the Karamojong do not know that other Ugandans are part of us."¹⁸¹ As pastoralism has never been considered a viable lifestyle by central administrators, very little resources have ever

¹⁸¹ Apus Andrew Lochiam, KISP elder, Kotido in an interview with Odhiambo. Odhiambo, "Karamoja Conflict Study," pg15.

been committed to truly developing Karamoja as the pastoralists would see fit. During border demarcation in colonial times, and re-drawing of district boundaries after independence, the Karamojong have progressively lost claim to land that they traditionally grazed. These have been persistent sources of conflict and grievance with neighbouring communities as means of sharing resources have not been found.

Lastly, *psychological factors*, or community trauma, should not be discounted. The Karamojong have voiced frustration at having been marginalized in terms of development, compared with their regional neighbours. Consistent attempts by successive governments and armed forces to discipline and punish the Karamojong have also left a bitter legacy. During colonial times under British rule, there were few pastoralists who were educated, thus many administrative officers originated from neighbouring communities. More recently during the 1980s, the Karamojong remember the corruption and disappearance of large herds of Karamojong cattle under Teso army commanders, and the atrocities committed by the (Iteso) Special Forces or the (Acholi and Langi) UNLA soldiers.¹⁸² These experiences have fermented into long-standing grudges against their neighbours in the region. In addition, the tit-for-tat logic of revenge, which is often common in intra-sectional conflicts, has been played out on a larger geographical and longer chronological scale.

After careful study and observation, the last two motives highlighted, the *political and economic marginalisation and psychological factors* seem to be the most relevant in the explanation of the viciousness, unnecessary destruction, and violence of recent large-scale cattle raids. Raiding activity during the past twenty years has evolved to display characteristics of punitive missions, reminiscent of ethnic cleansing in other conflicts. Beyond the rhetoric in the local media, there are well-documented studies on the systematic use of sexual violence by the Karamojong as a weapon.¹⁸³ This includes rape of pregnant

¹⁸² Katakwiri Urafiki Foundation, "Baseline Survey on Karamoja and Teso," pg26, 39.

¹⁸³ Farr, "Proceedings of the Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons Issues in Uganda: Dynamics, Concepts and Perspectives for Action", Isis-WICCE, "Medical Intervention Study of Teso.", Ruth Ojambo Ochieng, "A Gendered Reading of the Problems and Dynamics of SALW in Uganda," in *Gender Perspectives*

women, gang rape, defilement of children, sodomy of men, and forcing male relatives to watch the rape of their female family members:

The Karamojong raped me and took me far away. We were about six women. The Karamojong warriors were seven. They would move with our husbands and they would rape us while our husbands watched. One would leave you and move to the next one, and the one from the other woman would come to you. Three men actually raped me on that day. In the meantime, my husband was made to carry some things.¹⁸⁴

Recent literature in Gender Studies and Conflict Studies has explored the purposes of systematic sexual violence.¹⁸⁵ These include the de-humanization and humiliation of not only the individual woman, but also the men of the community by demonstrating they are powerless to defend their 'property' (i.e. families). In this way, sexual violence is not solely an act of social or interpersonal violence, but also a means of engendering political and economic loss, as systematic rape is often accompanied by the stripping of other political and economic assets.

In the case of Uganda, contemporary rustling by Karamojong and their accomplices is not only aimed at de-stocking affected communities, but also disrupting agricultural activity and general infrastructure. Victims have complained of the destruction of their granaries, schools, health centres, boreholes, cattle dips, the uprooting of crops, the looting of food and household items, as well as animals other than cattle (donkeys, pigs, chickens, etc.).¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, incidences of women who are the primary agricultural labourers, being

on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns, ed. Vanessa A. Farr and Kifle Mariam Gebrewold (Bonn: BICC, 2002).

¹⁸⁴ Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences," pg65.

¹⁸⁵ Erin Baines, "Rwanda and the Politics of the Body," (Vancouver, BC: Liu Centre for Global Issues, UBC, 2003), Liz Kelly, "Wars Against Women: Sexual Violence, Sexual Politics and the Militarised State," in *States of Conflict: Gender Violence and Resistance*, ed. Ruth Jacobson, Susie Jacobs, and Jen Marchbank (London: Zed Books, 2000), Meredith Turshen, "The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women during Armed Conflict in Africa," in *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark (London: Zed Books, 2001).

¹⁸⁶ North and East Lecturers and Students Association (NELSA) in Uganda Tertiary Institutions, 23 January 1994, K.A. Latigo-Olal, "The Effects of Cattle Rustling in Lango" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), Maikut, "Cattle Raiding in Kapchorwa District", pg7, Anders Narman, "Post-conflict reconstruction in Soroti District, Uganda," (Unpublished, 2003), Ochyengh, "A Case Study of Cattle Rustling in Teso".

kidnapped to be used as porters, concubines, and wives have also become commonplace.¹⁸⁷ These acts during raids, as well as the indiscriminate killing of men, women, children and the elderly have massively disrupted normal agricultural activity and livestock husbandry causing food insecurity to the extent that some districts have become dependent on food aid.¹⁸⁸ The aims of such disruptive attacks would appear to be similar to ethnic cleansing, however there are no reports of mass migration and permanent settlement of pastoralist communities in neighbouring districts. Despite the raids, in general the Karamojong only appear to be interested in seasonal migration into surrounding areas. An abundance of firearms and the willingness to use them have given the Karamojong the ability to use overwhelming force against neighbouring tribes, who are less armed.

Further alienation: A cycle of non-development

As a result of the severity of contemporary rustling activity and the humanitarian consequences, the 'Karamoja Question', of what to do with the Karamojong, is a polemic debate for politicians and the Ugandan nation as a whole. Often, the problematic is obscured by virulent rhetoric and outcry over the effects of raiding activity, which has obscured the fundamental challenges and obstacles facing the Karamojong. Despite the identification of various root causes of the conflict, the national political elite have generally failed to understand the scope and magnitude of the social, political, economic and environmental challenges facing Karamoja resulting from a history of inappropriate government policies. According to the sociologist Joshia Osamba:

...official state policy therefore tends to view cattle rustling and banditry as a mere cultural problem of the pastoralists and not a serious threat to state security...The state's opinion, therefore is that the pastoral society is conservative, slow to adapt to change and in many respects actually against change. Raiding is therefore portrayed as a factor that is embedded in the pastoralists' mentality and that can only be

¹⁸⁷ Isis-WICCE, "Documentation of Teso Women's Experiences," pg61, 63-65, Okwara, "Family, Women and Children in the Context of Insecurity", pg6.

¹⁸⁸ "Rapid Assessment of Katakwi Internally Displaced Persons," (Kampala: UN OCHA, 2002).

eradicated by the discontinuation of pastoralism and the adoption of agriculture, or by transforming it into ranching.¹⁸⁹

The pastoralists have demonstrated progressively more aggressive raiding, road banditry, seasonal migration farther into other districts, and increasingly predatory pastoralist behaviour. These actions are not understood as coping mechanisms of the pastoralists to survive. Instead, this 'anti-social' behaviour is perceived as a clash between 'modern' and 'primitive' society. As noted by one scholar of the region, "It is difficult to police people who have a stronger allegiance to their ethnic empire than the modern nation-state. They are always moving in search of water and pasture."¹⁹⁰ For both the colonial and post-colonial state of Uganda, modernization has become a means of legitimizing a particular form of domination and development-induced violence.¹⁹¹ This is predicated on the belief that development progresses linearly from hunting and gathering societies, to nomadic pastoralism, to sedentary agriculture, to industrialization.¹⁹² The current NRM government, despite its well-meaning efforts, continues to demonstrate a normative preference for sedentary development:

While the government has stated its commitment to the development of Karamoja, it has also stated its opposition to the Karamojong way of life. The government, and more specifically the President has taken the position that pastoralism is backward and primitive; and that development, for the people of Karamoja lies in their abandoning pastoralism, and adopting settled agriculture.¹⁹³

A century of forceful policies towards the Karamojong, be they developmental or disarmament, have failed because the policies did not understand, appreciate, or accept pastoralism. The extent to which negative attitudes are pervasive amongst the political elite is

¹⁸⁹ Osamba, *The Sociology of Insecurity*.

¹⁹⁰ Joshua O. Osamba, "The Sociology of Insecurity: Cattle Rustling and Banditry in North-Western Kenya," *Africa Journal in Conflict Resolution*, no. 1 (2000): pg8.

¹⁹¹ Arturo Escobar, "Development, Violence and the New Imperial Order," *Development*, 47, no. 1 (2004), Wendy Harcourt and Smitu Kothari, "Introduction: The Violence of Development," *Development*, 47, no. 1 (2004), Smitu Kothari, "Revisiting the Violence of Development: An Interview with Ashis Nandy," *Development*, 47, no. 1 (2004).

¹⁹² Oloka-Onyango, Zie, and Muhereza, "CBR Workshop Report No.1," pg7., Rigby, "Pastoralism and Prejudice," pg4.

¹⁹³ Odhiambo, "Karamoja Conflict Study," pg18, Absalom Kenneth Oteng, "The Role of Cattle in the Development of the National Economy" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994).

reflected in Prime Minister Prof. Apollo Nsibambi's comments to the Karamoja Parliamentary Group in 1999, in response to their demands for 200 million shillings promised by the President for road development in the region. "Don't expect too much from the Government for the development of Karamoja. You have too many cows. Why don't you sell off some and raise enough revenue for development projects."¹⁹⁴

Karamoja, unlike the rest of Uganda, did not begin with a level playing field in terms of economic and social development. For much of its contemporary history, this region has been cut off from its neighbours and has been described as a 'Human Zoo'.¹⁹⁵ It continues to suffer from a poor infrastructure network, including roads, telephony and electricity.¹⁹⁶ For example, rationed electricity only exists in the three administrative centres of Kotido, Moroto and Nakapelimoru. It is provided by generators, which discourages the development of any kind of mechanized industry, including large-scale mining of the region's vast mineral wealth.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, the local government has a limited and ineffective presence on the ground. As a result, the NRM policy of decentralization has not been as successful in Karamoja compared with other districts. Primarily, this is due to the low levels of confidence in the over-politicized system. "Government people operate in an entirely different sphere to anyone who is an actual resource user."¹⁹⁸ As a result, locally elected leaders suffer from a lack of legitimacy due to competing nodes of authority, namely the elders and warlords. In reality, the Karamojong live mainly in a self-help system. As the district administrators have difficulty in collecting taxes from the pastoralists, few government services are offered. Most of the funding for the districts' budgets derives from national block and equalization grants;

¹⁹⁴ Eric Lakidi, "Karamoja MPs demand sh200m," *The New Vision*, 16 November 1999.

¹⁹⁵ Cisterino, "Karamoja: The Human Zoo".

¹⁹⁶ Dan Omara Atubo, "Cooperation for development in the region" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994).

¹⁹⁷ "The Socio-economic and Environmental Affects of Marble and Limestone Mining on the Slopes of Mt. Moroto," (Moroto: KADP, 2003).

¹⁹⁸ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg22.

and this is shared amongst all of the departments and district bureaucracy, leaving few funds for actual programming.¹⁹⁹

Although local civil servants have initiated innovative means of providing services, such as the Nomadic Community Health Workers (NCHWs) and Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), these programmes have a very limited scope, and rely largely on foreign funding.²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Karamoja continues to exhibit some of the worse development indicators in Uganda, including the war-torn northern districts. In 1994, the Infant Mortality Rate in Karamoja was 146/1000 live births, while the national average was 122/1000 live births. Similarly, the Under-Five Mortality Rate was 226.5/1000 live births in Karamoja, compared with the average of 203/1000 live births in Uganda as a whole. Literacy levels hover around 11.5% in Karamoja, compared to the much higher national average of 54%.²⁰¹ The Karamojong are also poorly represented in state institutions, such as the army, police, bureaucracy, and in the public life of Uganda (for example artists, journalists, higher education, etc.).²⁰² The recent efforts to develop the north-eastern districts, albeit with very limited resources, have been applauded by the pastoralists. However, the Karamojong continue to view the state with suspicion and scepticism. "There is the long held belief amongst the Karimojong that Karamoja is being deliberately kept back in a state of backwardness."²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pg6, 20., Elly K. Rwakakooko, "Role Definition for Meaningful Peace and Development in the Context of Decentralisation" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994).

²⁰⁰ "Mobile health services for Karamoja," *Uganda Confidential*, 23-29 August 2002., Anthony Okech, "Needs Assessment Survey for Functional Adult Literacy in Karamoja Uganda 2000," (Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and World Food Programme-Uganda, 2000?), pg13, 45.

²⁰¹ These figures originate from the last available Uganda National Situation Analysis. More recent statistics are available, but are incomplete and thus not appropriate for regional comparison. Wamai and Barton, "Women, Adolescents and Children in the Context of Insecurity", pg7-10., Okech, "Needs Assessment Survey for Functional Adult Literacy in Karamoja Uganda 2000," pg12.

²⁰² Interview with NGO 17.

²⁰³ de Jode, "Grazing Matter: Findings of the Karamoja Wildlife Management Project, Uganda," pg20.

It is apparent that there is a lack of trust and confidence amongst the pastoralists, that the government is willing or has the ability to act in their best interests. The Karamojong are not alone in having poor state-society relations. According to de Jode:

Development initiatives within East African pastoralist communities have taken many forms both before and after independence, ranging from unabashed attempts to sedentarize pastoral peoples as ranching entrepreneurs or turn them away from livestock rearing completely, to small-scale livestock, education, and health initiatives, to providing direct famine relief during crises. Few if any development schemes have succeeded, probably due in part to the fact that rarely have development planners included pastoralists in the fundamental stages of decision-making.²⁰⁴

Even relatively high-profile initiatives by the current NRM government, such as the Karamoja Development Agency and a Minister of State for Karamoja, under the Office of the President, have had a limited impact because they continue to perpetuate a top-down management of development in Karamoja.²⁰⁵ More specifically, local residents have complained that "...there has been a tendency to treat Karamoja as a perpetual war zone where democracy is considered a luxury and policy is seldom made through sustained inquiry and deliberation, and scarcely through popular consultation. Rather policy is usually the end product of a string of ad hoc decisions taken in response to immediate situations."²⁰⁶ The history of disarmament in Karamoja is a prime example of reactive central government policies, based on short-term political calculations, instead of a sustained interest to overcome the ecological crisis and resolve the political and economic marginalisation of the region and its people.

In general, the myth, that pastoralism is not environmentally sustainable or a socially viable way of life has been pervasive in the policies of all colonial and post-colonial Ugandan governments. Productive and sustainable pastoralism is possible; however, this would require the freedom to move for both stock and herders. More broadly, it requires the tacit

²⁰⁴ Bilinda Straight, "Development Ideologies and Local Knowledge among Samburu Women in Northern Kenya," in *Rethinking Pastoralism in Africa: Gender Culture and the Myth of the Patriarchal Pastoralist*, ed. Dorothy Hodgson (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), pg241.

²⁰⁵ Government of Uganda, "The National Strategic Plan for Karamoja," (Kampala: Office of the Prime Minister, Dept of Pacification and Development, 2003).

²⁰⁶ Oloka-Onyango, Zie, and Muhereza, "CBR Workshop Report No.1," pg18.

acceptance by government leaders that the majority of the population in Karamoja can only be sustained in the long-term through agro-pastoralism. Thus, the focus of government development efforts should be “ensuring the sustainability of a non-destructive pastoralism in Karamoja”.²⁰⁷ In hindsight, one European NGO worker concluded, “Education, tomatoes, beans; most Karamojong are not interested in any of the things we brought. We saw the solution to their problems as settled agriculture; they saw the solution as traditional cattle-herding, amended with guns. They were right and we were wrong.”²⁰⁸

In order to gain a better understanding of why the Karamojong have persistently resisted efforts by the state to disarm them, this chapter has examined the dynamics affecting their society in the post-independence period. These challenges include the commercialization of cattle raiding; militarisation of the conflict; rise of the warlords and social mutation; rising population and degradation of the environment; conflict with neighbouring districts; and a cycle of non-development (including the lack of political representation and industry). These challenges have all contributed to the destabilization of the environmental, political, social and strategic situation, and have resulted in an increase in both the potential and incidences of armed conflict in the Karamoja region and surrounding area.

Conclusion

The current condition of Karamoja must be framed in the post-independence history of Uganda. Successive civil wars, unstable regimes, poor governance in the case of Karamoja, have characterized this period. The post-colonial era was marked by a loosening of the monopoly of power by the state due to the internal political chaos in Uganda. However, paradoxically, successive governments continued the British era policy of the pacification

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Champkin was working for a famine relief/development NGO in Karamoja in 1981-2 just after the major famine of 1981. Julian Champkin, “Third World Review: A crop of good intentions,” *The Guardian (London)*, 5 December 1986.

and domination of the Karamoja. This strategy prioritized law and order issues, such as the prohibition of raiding. The extent to which state lawmakers mistakenly believed that pastoralist behaviour could be legislated from above is reflected in the 1964 Administration of Justice (Karamoja) Act, which states “Paragraph 42 (1) c: where three or more persons assemble carrying any weapon any such persons shall be deemed, unless the contrary is proved, to be preparing for taking part in or returning from a cattle raid.”²⁰⁹ The prohibition of cattle rustling is illustrative of the failure of subsequent post-independence governments in dealing with the challenges of the Karamoja region. There was a tendency among administrators to regard raiding activities as a breach of order that was an undesirable and illegal activity. They failed to gain an understanding of why certain actions were considered legitimate amongst pastoralist populations, and the purpose or goal of these cultural institutions, such as cattle raiding or migration. The repression of certain cultural practices by banning them only served to drive these activities underground, making any gradual evolution almost impossible. The law and order policy for inducing development in Karamoja that began in the colonial period was based on short-term thinking, and the resulting violent cycle of action by the pastoralists and government responses only served to worsen relations between the two. This often heavy-handed approach prevented a flexible government policy response as the political, security and ecological situation in Karamoja has degenerated.

All post-independence governments in Uganda have unsuccessfully attempted to disarm the Karamojong by force. These ad hoc weapons collection programs did not address the dynamic challenges that faced Karamojong society, instead each government was concerned with the subjugation and control of the supposedly errant pastoralist population. Analysis of Karamoja’s contemporary history of the past 120 years has demonstrated that post-colonial policies are similar to those of the British, both in terms of their priorities and

²⁰⁹ *The Administration of Justice (Karamoja) Act*, Chapter 35, pg648.

logic. The Ugandan state has consistently viewed increasing levels of armament amongst the pastoralists as problematic, primarily due to the effects of armed violence on neighbouring (agricultural) districts. There has been scant concern regarding the pastoralists' own security preoccupations, because pastoralism has not been viewed as a desirable, modern, sustainable mode of production. Both the British and Ugandan administrators and politicians have shown a marked preference for development through sedentary activities such as agriculture or ranching. At times throughout the country's history, there have been attempts to modernize the 'primitives', their political structures, and traditional dress, through forceful means. The resources committed to the development of the Karamoja region have generally been insufficient and inconsistent, and lacking a long-term vision of how to promote sustainable pastoralism.

While there are many similarities between colonial and post-colonial policies towards Karamoja, there are two important differences with regards to security issues. Firstly, various governments in the past 20 years have armed the Karamojong for their own political purposes. This has not been consistent with messages of non-proliferation, and as a result, disarmament efforts by the government are perceived by the pastoralists as punitive measures and not as means to increase their general security through the framework of national security. Secondly, since independence, cooperation efforts with neighbouring states to address the small arms issue have been inconsistent. This is largely attributed to regional politics and personalities, such as the collapse of the East African Community or more recently the cool relations between (former) President Moi of Kenya and President Museveni.²¹⁰

Despite the frequently cited fact that small arms have caused increasing incidences of violent raiding, this discourse may be misleading. The contemporary violence perpetrated by Karamojong warriors, both inside the sub-region and in neighbouring districts, should be

²¹⁰ The East African Community collapsed in 1977. Hooper and Pirouet, "Uganda," pg25-26.

understood in the context of the profound challenges facing Karamojong society. These include poor state-society relations, which include an alienation of the North-eastern part of Uganda from the rest of the Republic; the increasing un-sustainability of a pastoralist lifestyle in the current conditions as a result of environmental and legislative changes; and the social mutation such as new sources of authority, values, and rules. The colonial and post-colonial government policies towards the region have served only to aggravate these political, economic and social challenges. Military style, automatic weapons are tools of technology, and means of achieving a particular goal. The reduction of their prevalence and use may necessitate long-term policies aimed at addressing the immediate 'demand factors' of firearms, such as the political, economic and social problems facing the pastoralists, in addition to the political will to root out commercialized cattle rustling. The most recent disarmament program, which shall be examined in the next chapter, has made uncertain steps in this direction.

Part Two

The Karamoja Case Study

Chapter 6:

Coming to a Head:

The 2001 – 2002 Disarmament Program

Chapter 6: Coming to a Head: The 2001-2002 Disarmament Program

Introduction

The 2001-2002 weapons collection program in Uganda should be considered as a page in the on-going history of strained relations between the state and pastoralists of the Karamoja region. It is symbolic of the troubled interactions that the Karamojong have had with the state in the domains of security and development. This chapter will examine why this most recent program in Karamoja ended in failure, despite the attempt to integrate some contemporary trends in practical disarmament literature. The first part of the discussion will focus on the seemingly coherent conception and implementation of the program, including community consultations, and the government discourse on development and the notion of security. I will examine the organization and results of the voluntary, first phase of the program, as well as positive innovations such as the Civil Military Operation Centres. The second part of this chapter will analyse the problematic aspects of the government's disarmament exercise, both in terms of planning and enforcement. I shall describe the insufficiencies of the initial organization, including the timing, financing and role of incentives, as well as the effects of the forceful, second phase of disarmament, including human rights abuses, the de-commissioning of arms, and the resulting strategic and security environment. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the disarmament program could have better addressed the needs of the small arms users and their community.

1) A seemingly coherent weapons collection program...

a) Conceptual links to contemporary thinking on practical disarmament

After over thirty years of post-independence political chaos, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government has gone to great lengths to woo back the international development community. During the 1990s, Uganda became one of the developing darlings of donors by

instituting significant economic reforms which contributed to GDP growth rates of over 4% per year during the period 1993-2002.¹ Major donor initiatives in Uganda have included a Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration program (DDR), the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), participation in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief program and continued national budget supplementary aid.² During the course of its growing 'partnership' with international donors, the NRM government has successfully adopted donor discourse on many development issues. The 2001-2002 weapons collection program in Karamoja reflected the assimilation of certain ideas and vocabulary prevalent in contemporary micro-disarmament literature. This section will examine three major concepts that the Ugandan government highlighted in their disarmament program, including: the voluntary and participatory collection of firearms; development; and security, and how the program unfolded in practice during the first phase of disarmament.

i) Voluntary and Participatory Disarmament

Contrary to popular belief, serious discussions and government positioning on disarmament in Karamoja did not begin with the March 2000 parliamentary motion. Disarmament had remained a policy option for the NRM government, but had not been seriously attempted since 1986-87. The political programme of the NRM government, the Ten Point Programme, was more interested in reconciling the state with minority populations, such as the Karamojong, by developing and settling the pastoralist populations in a top-down approach. Disarmament had been discussed in 1994, as the

¹ This rate of growth was eight times the average in Sub-Saharan Africa during the same period. Torgny Holmgren et al., "Uganda," in *Aid and Reform in Africa: Lessons from Ten Case Studies*, ed. Shantayanan Devarajan, David Dollar, and Torgny Holmgren (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001), World Bank, *World Development Report 2005: A Better Investment Climate for Everyone* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004) pg7.

² The 1992 DDR program in Uganda demobilized 36,358 soldiers and costed an estimated \$43.2 million, 88.7% of which was funded by bilateral and multilateral donors. Nat J. Colletta, Markus Kostner, and Ingo Wiederhofer, "Case Studies in War-to-Peace Transition: The Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda," (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1996), pg3, 20, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence Department, of International Development, United Kingdom, "Uganda: Country Strategy Paper," (London: DFID, 1999), Alcira Kreimer et al., "Uganda: Post-Conflict Reconstruction," (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000).

topic of a major national conference.³ However, despite the fact that the Karamojong raiders were a perennial nuisance and menace to neighbouring districts, the armed warriors had proven to be a valuable strategic ally to the NRM government. As the armed Karamojong did not directly threaten the state, unlike the rebel LRA movement, the NRM government had implicitly prioritized threats to the state over the human security of its citizens.

By July 1999, the UPDF was getting increasingly involved in mounting conflict between the Jie-Turkana-Matheniko and the Dodoth-Bokora. The army had made some crucial operational errors and was perceived by the various parties to be siding with one group over another. Tension in the region was very high, because the UPDF was using communal punishment, by impounding stock from the various clans in army barracks, as a means of conflict management. On July 10, 1999 the situation exploded. Twenty-four government troops and ASTU soldiers were killed in an ambush at Panyagara, Kotido district. Various military equipment and weapons were stolen and two Buffalo armoured personnel carriers were destroyed by Jie warriors.⁴ Local leaders complained that the UPDF did not have a sufficient presence on the ground and that they were not in total control of the vigilantes. Reports in the press at this time suggested that the number of weapons in Karamojong hands, estimated between 100-150,000, was twice the number possessed by state security forces. Generally, residents were fearful that the conflict could escalate to the state-society level, from the then inter-clan conflict.

The situation deteriorated in early September. On September 9, 1999 the UPDF in an attempt to “weaken the stubborn warriors” massacred 500 Bokora warriors at Kalosarich, Moroto district; the Bokora had earlier attacked Matheniko kraals in Moru Ariwon and were in retreat when they were bombed by UPDF gunships.⁵ President Museveni was unrepentant about the attack and spoke for the first time of disarming the Karamojong. Local leaders and Members of Parliament

³Peter T Lokeris, "Master Development Plan for Restoration of Peace and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994).

⁴ Nathan Etengu and Grace Matsiko, "The Karimojong should be tamed," *The New Vision*, 22 September 1999.

⁵ Sylvester Onyang, "UPDF miss bull's eye in Karamoja: 500 killed as modern weapons arm old cultures," *The Monitor*, 22 September 1999.

attempted to diffuse the explosive situation, in which over 800 people were killed between July-September 1999. In an effort to preempt and influence eventual government plans for a forceful disarmament, the Karamoja Parliamentary Group met with the Prime Minister in early October to present their own proposals for disarmament. The Karamojong MPs asked that the arms trafficking from Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia be addressed as a priority; they warned that if the arms trade was not stopped before disarmament, re-armament would occur. They also asked for a permanent military presence in Karamoja, including a helicopter gunship, similar to other areas of insecurity in Uganda. They claimed that the government was neglecting Karamoja and that often the military response in the region had been too slow.⁶

In response to the Parliamentary Group initiative, the President agreed to facilitate a fact-finding, mobilization peace mission for all Karamojong MPs. Beginning on October 18, the mission led by the Chairman of the Karamoja Parliamentary Group, John Lorot and the Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, Peter Lokeris, travelled to all counties in Moroto and Kotido over a two week period, to meet with elected officials, elders, kraal leaders and ngikaracuna in community meetings.⁷ The opinions expressed were varied. The Pokot demanded compensation for surrendered weapons, at a price of 20 heads of cattle per gun. Lokeris refused, stating that the guns were illegal and the cost would be too exorbitant for the government. The Pokot also asked that the vigilantes remained armed so that they may protect the kraals.⁸ In general, all sections of the Karamojong wanted simultaneous disarmament of neighbouring tribes, including the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya and the Didinka and Toposa of Sudan. The Matheniko community agreed to disarmament, on the condition that the government promised to protect them and their cattle.⁹ The Bokora demonstrated less confidence in the state. The meeting with the Bokora community was heated; local leaders claimed that the government had forgotten that the Karamojong fought off the LRA

⁶ Oscar Okech, "MPs set terms on Karamoja guns withdrawal," *The New Vision*, 2 October 1999.

⁷ Conspicuously, women were absent from these initial public consultations. Sylvester Onyang, "MPs on peace mission," *The Monitor*, 15 October 1999.

⁸ Oscar Okech and Anthony Lokwanga, "20 cows per gun - K'Jong set terms," *The New Vision?* October 1999, Sylvester Onyang, "K'Jong ask for Shs 4m per gun," *The Monitor?* October 1999.

⁹ Oscar Okech and Anthony Lokwanga, "Karimojong to surrender guns," *The New Vision?* October 1999.

rebels.¹⁰ Journalists covering the mission reported a climate of intimidation preventing public support for disarmament; individuals feared being accused of betrayal by their community.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect about these events, was that for the first time MPs were attempting to convince the government to organize a participatory weapons collection program, instead of a forceful operation. The Karamoja Parliamentary Group compiled their recommendations in an eight point report.¹¹ They suggested that the disarmament “be implemented as a voluntary and participatory process by the vigilantes in collaboration with national security agencies, the elders, the opinion leaders and local councillors”, “implemented according to a timetable set by the government, but not commencing earlier than three months after a conscientisation campaign”.¹² This was the beginning of a substantial and impressive series of efforts by both the government and civil society to consult with the Karamojong about a possible disarmament program. After a parliamentary motion on disarmament was tabled in March 2000 by MPs from neighbouring districts, the public consultations increased, often acting as the only source of information about the eventuality of disarmament for local residents.¹³

Shortly after the resolution obliging the government to disarm the Karamojong within 12 months was passed in parliament, the President called upon the MPs from Karamoja and districts affected by cattle raiding to meet. They discussed a policy paper drawn up by Dr. Robert Limlim, the Coordinator of the former Karamoja Task Force.¹⁴ He advocated a participatory process of disarmament, that would be locally-owned, involving the Karamojong in every step of the way

¹⁰ Sylvester Onyang, "Our guns protect Museveni-K'jong," *The Monitor*, 24 October 1999.

¹¹ The Karamoja Parliamentary Group also recommended: a reorganization of the local security system; the establishment of an adequate judicial response to cattle theft; the construction of dams to limit migratory movement; the disbanding of concentrated kraals to avoid large-scale raids; and the establishment of a Peace and Development Commission to coordinate donor and civil society efforts in the region. Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Special Report - Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights," (Kampala: Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2004), pg65-66.

¹² Pax Christi Netherlands, "Voluntary disarmament of pastoralists: an integrated, phased, community-based strategy. Draft project proposal for Karamoja, North-east Uganda," (Utrecht, The Netherlands: Pax Christi Netherlands, 2000), pg10.

¹³ Interview with NGO 8.

¹⁴ The Karamoja Task Force was an initiative of the 1994 'National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts', which had the mandate of strengthening security and governance in Karamoja. The Task Force only lasted two years, but Dr. Limlim later rallied an independent group of elite Karamojong with a similar goal under the name 'Karamoja Disarmament and Development Secretariat'.

including the design, implementation and monitoring of the program. Dr. Limlim stressed that any exercise should be preceded by a “sensitization and consensus-building process involving the various communities, kraal leaders, cultural leader, women’s groups, Local Councils, religious leaders, etc.”¹⁵ Other initiatives in 2000 soliciting a voluntary and participatory approach, included a draft project proposal by the international NGO Pax Christi Netherlands, and a research study by a local NGO, the Action for Development of Local Communities (ADOL). These recommendations were presented and discussed at the Ministerial level, including the Minister of State for Security, Hon. Muruli Mukasa and the Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, Hon. Peter Lokeris.¹⁶

Much of the participatory initiatives advocated by the Karamojong Parliamentary Group and the Karamoja Task Force were facilitated by the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) and paid for by the Human Rights and Democratisation Programme (HRDP) of DANIDA and the European Union. First the HRDP attempted to diffuse the virulent national reaction to the bloody September 13, 2001 raid of the Ngariam IDP camp, in Katakwi District, by neighbouring Karamojong warriors, by organizing a workshop with NGOs from the affected regions shortly after the incident. Here the participants agreed “to involve civil society networks in all efforts to deal with the proliferation of arms and cattle rustling, and to undertake district level meetings of civil society on “effective and peaceful disarmament and adequate security in the affected areas””.¹⁷

A follow up meeting was then organized in mid-November 2001 in Moroto District by the UHRC and the HRDP. The participants included 200 kraal leaders, militamen and women from the Pian, Pokot, Bokora and Matheniko communities. Significantly, they pledged to work with civil society organizations (CSOs), local council leaders and the UPDF to achieve peaceful disarmament; they also stressed the importance of women in fostering dialogue with neighbouring communities

¹⁵ Pax Christi Netherlands, "Voluntary disarmament of pastoralists: an integrated, phased, community-based strategy," pg12.

¹⁶ Interview with Hon. Peter Lokeris, Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, 4 Dec 2003. Action for Development of Local Communities in conjunction with USAID, "Research and Workshop Report on Feasible, Participatory, Peaceful and Sustainable Disarmament of the Karamojong," (Kampala: ADOL, 2000).

¹⁷ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "UHRC Annual Report," (Kampala: Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2001), pg79.

and agreed to give women a lead role in brokering peace and advancing the disarmament process.¹⁸ Although many of the declarations in the final workshop document were unrealistically optimistic and were never kept, this was the first opportunity for citizens from Karamoja to voice their expectations of all the stakeholders to be involved in the disarmament program, including the UPDF, the central government, the local government and donors. The final document was even presented to President Museveni, while he was in the district preparing for the launch of the program. Perhaps most importantly, this kind of participatory activity encouraged the notion that all members of society, including women, were implicated in the success of the weapons collection program. It should be noted however that not all Karamojongs were happy about the inclusive nature of the consultations and felt that the external interventions were disruptive to gender relations in Karamoja. Some participants of a later stocktaking meeting of the disarmament program expressed their view that the inclusion of women in the consultative process was contrary to local cultural norms, as the Karamojong did not allow women to talk in public and their authority was limited to the homestead.¹⁹

A subsequent workshop organized by the HRDP with 300 local stakeholders in Kotido District, produced an even franker picture of the fears and hopes of youth, women, kraal leaders, elders, parish chiefs and locally elected representatives. The participants articulated specific concerns of the possibility of government corruption and mismanagement of the weapons collection programme, UPDF indiscipline during the disarmament exercise, and the possibility that the government might withdraw troops in the case of external aggression.²⁰ These all proved to be prescient concerns. The participants wanted the UPDF to provide security before the hand over of weapons, especially along border areas. They recommended that the UPDF be given rules of engagement so that the disarmament proceeded as an exercise, not a military operation. The locals

¹⁸ "Workshop Decisions from the workshop on Karamoja for Peaceful and Effective Disarmament" (Moroto, Uganda, 18-20 November 2001).

¹⁹ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights," pg108.

²⁰ Human Rights and Democratization Programme (DANIDA), "A Report on a Two Day Peace Initiative Workshop (KOPEIN) in Kotido District Conducted on the 29th and 30th of November 2001," (DANIDA, 2001).

also suggested that a third party sensitize and monitor the actions of the army, and that compensation should be given in cases of human rights abuses. There were also several concerns voiced regarding the transparency of the exercise, in particular about the money spent and the arms collected. The community wanted records to be kept and published of the arms collected and what the UPDF did with these weapons. In regards to incentives, surprisingly there is little mention of individual rewards, outside of certification of compliance. Instead the focus of the participants seemed to be more on community-based, long-term development, such as roads, water facilities, ranches, education, veterinary services and communication links. Although the language in the workshop report varies, the document demonstrates that the various stakeholders in Karamoja had a sophisticated understanding of the government's decision to disarm them and what strategic and economic implications it would have for their community and families.

Overall, the extent of civil society participation in the consultations and mobilization for the WCP was historically unprecedented in Uganda, where disarmament had always been a top-down process led by the armed forces without consultation of local and national stakeholders. The various participatory initiatives, including the government-mandated Karamojong Parliamentary Group report on disarmament, the policy paper by the Coordinator of the Karamoja Task Force, the organization of a variety of workshops by the UHRC and HRDP, were all tacitly supported by the Ugandan government. At the district and ministerial level, representatives were present at all important gatherings. This served to legitimize the disarmament strategy in the eyes of the general public and more importantly, allowed the central government to show to international actors that it had learned the increasingly donor-required modalities of participatory, pro-marginalized group policymaking. A government official from the Ugandan small arms bureau explained "The approaches (of past disarmament efforts) were wrong. The Karamojong are not the enemies of the state, but they were treated like that. This time we tried to show that they were partners, that's why

this disarmament program succeeded.”²¹ However, as this chapter will later show, encouraging consultations with local Karamojongs did not translate into a successful program, as many of the concerns and recommendations of stakeholders were only nominally addressed in practice.

ii) Disarmament and Development

A second common theme amongst all of the various reports and public consultations prior to exercise was the issue of compensation for the surrender of firearms, and more broadly the need to address the economic marginalisation of the semi-arid region. This reflected a minor seismic shift in the political (and material) culture of Uganda. While all previous attempts at disarmament in Karamoja had been forceful in nature, without any discussion of compensation, contemporary public attitudes in Karamoja reflected the trends in practical disarmament literature and practice that gun users ought to be compensated initially to encourage participation. Moreover, practitioners believe that weapons collection programs are unlikely to have a sustainable impact unless they address the root causes of violence and the motivations for gun demand.²² As a result, since the mid-1990s disarmament programs had evolved from gun ‘buy-backs’ (involving cash inducements), to ‘guns for goods’ (such as bicycles, sewing machines, etc.), to ‘weapons for development’ (rewarding entire communities).

Initially, government representatives seemed to resist the idea of ‘compensation for guns’ as it was felt that rewarding illegal gun ownership decriminalized the possession of illegal weapons, as well as condoning atrocities committed by raiders.²³ However, most users appeared to view their weapons as a personal commodity. One kraal leader in Upe county told the Karamoja Parliamentary Group “I am tired of my gun and can surrender it. But we do not manufacture guns. We bought them using cows, so the Government should pay for them by refunding our cattle”.²⁴ ADOL’s

²¹ Interview with SEC 4.

²² Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the human cost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pg279-80.

²³ Onyang, "K'Jong ask for Shs 4m per gun."

²⁴ Okech and Lokwanga, "20 cows per gun - K'Jong set terms."

research prior to the program indicated that most sections of the Karamojong wanted compensation for the guns because they had been the “only means of survival...and protection for their animals”. Respondants to ADOL’s poll and group interview were more likely to demand individual incentives or ‘buy-backs’ ranging from one million Ush to four bulls (equivalent to 600,000 Ush).²⁵ Very little mention was made of communal development incentives or the eventual inducements which were given, such as maize meal, oxploughs or iron sheets. These items however were advocated by Parliamentary Group; they suggested that “the individual gun-owners be rewarded with a ‘resettlement-package’ consisting of an (unspecified) number of cattle, oxen and ox-ploughs and corrugated iron-sheets.”²⁶

Only Pax Christi explicitly recommended a ‘weapons for development’ approach. They felt that in order to prevent the recycling of incentives for individuals into new firearms, “rewards should preferably be investments in improving the conditions of community life”.²⁷ Proposed incentives included community trust funds for development at the sub-county level under the responsibility of a community committee pending the achievement of particular communal collection targets, as well as token individual goods, such as radios which would help diffuse the disarmament campaign to the larger community. Other Karamojong leaders stated that they would have preferred non-discriminatory, communal projects linked to their pastoral way of life, including cattle crushes and dips, and valley dams.²⁸ From my own field research, I found that few of the respondents in rural areas felt that they had been consulted about their needs or desires for compensation. Some ngikaracuna expressed their frustration that they would have preferred micro-loans and/or retraining for alternative livelihoods, such as brick making or mining.²⁹ Many of the

²⁵ Action for Development of Local Communities in conjunction with USAID, "Feasible, Participatory, Peaceful and Sustainable Disarmament of the Karamojong," pg15-16.

²⁶ Pax Christi Netherlands, "Voluntary disarmament of pastoralists: an integrated, phased, community-based strategy," pg10.

²⁷ Ibid., pg17.

²⁸ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights," pg89.

²⁹ Interviews with CIV 4, CIV 6, CIV 8.

youth interviewed did not feel that an alternative means of acquiring wealth or a sustainable livelihood was offered in exchange for their gun.

Even the parliamentary motion which was tabled by angry MPs from neighbouring districts agreed that development was integral to a sustainable solution to the challenges of small arms proliferation in Karamoja. After consultations with Karamojong MPs they amended their motion entitled “A motion for resolution respecting the disarmament of the Karimojong warriors, restraining the said Karimojong warriors from invading neighbouring districts and involving them in participatory and self-sustaining development”.³⁰ While the resolution passed on March 15, 2000 makes no mention of incentives, it does call on the government to establish a development plan for Karamoja, and to provide:

- i) Basic social services e.g. health facilities, provision of water for human consumption, livestock development;
- ii) Free and compulsory education up to secondary school level and scholarships for those in tertiary institutions;
- iii) Economic diversification and improved human productivity through appropriate skills and sustainable development programmes;
- iv) Infrastructure development which includes: power, all weather (tarmac) roads, telephone and construction of administrative centres where appropriate.³¹

The government, for its part was happy to swath the weapons collection program in the vocabulary of development, in particular when addressing a Karamojong audience. The Minister of State for Internal Affairs, Kiyingi Namusoke, stated the weapons collection program mandated by the resolution passed in Parliament was to be “comprehensive”, based on concerns for development and security.³² The government was thus able to delay the launching of the disarmament program, citing the slow and complex nature of the demands for security and development, such as increased border control, assurance of food security and the provision of water sources and dams, until this position was politically untenable due to the large-scale raid at Ngariam in September 2001. However, as will be discussed later in the chapter, when the program was finally implemented there

³⁰ Capt. Asingura Kagoro, "The Disarmament Program in Uganda with Special Focus on the Karamoja Case: Approaches, Methods and Outcomes," (2002), pg53.

³¹ Ibid., pg55.

³² Parliament of Uganda, *Debate on the Report of the Minister of State for Internal Affairs on Katakwi Internally Displaced Persons*, 7th Parliament, 1st Session, 2nd Meeting, 14 August 2001, pg357.

was no serious attempt by the government to link long-term socio-economic development with the disarmament program.

iii) The provision of security

The third element common to all public consultations and plans for disarmament in Karamoja was the need to ensure ‘security first’, or a ‘proportional and integrated approach to security and disarmament’. This approach was pioneered in Mali in the mid-1990s and resulted in one of the first practical disarmament programs to be funded by donors, breaking a long standing taboo that development funds should not be used for the security sector. Although the funding aspect of the Karamoja disarmament exercise for development purposes proved to be elusive, the government was receptive to public concerns regarding security. Although one may ask “whose security”? Up until spring 2000, when the public debate qualitatively changed due to the tabling of the parliamentary motion, the government had tolerated the possession of weapons amongst the pastoralist population because the Karamojong had no designs on political power and because the pastoralists were threatened by external raids from neighbouring tribes in Kenya and Sudan. Although a perennial concern, the rationale for disarmament was not the insecurity caused by the pastoralists in neighbouring areas, and even less so the damage caused within the Karamojong region. As explained by one observer:

Karamoja is a security priority for the government, but it fluctuates and depends on the seasons and who is affected...if the conflict in Karamoja is internal, the government doesn't really care. During the Presidential elections, the President wanted to seem like he was doing something (about Karamoja). It's the same every time there is a referendum or election, because Karamoja is an issue for neighbouring districts. They try to appease these districts.³³

³³ Interview with OTHER 3. Indeed, in the most recent Presidential and Parliamentary elections the governing National Resistance Movement fared poorly in districts neighbouring Karamoja. Three Ministers of State from the Teso region lost their seats. President Museveni's 2001 election promise to rid the region of Karamojong raids, and his failure to achieve any lasting results, are the main reasons for the election loss according to political pundits. Milton Olupot, *Why Teso Voted Against Museveni* (28 February 2006 [accessed 10 March 2006]); available from: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200602280800.html>.

The government, in effect, had greater state-security concerns; Ugandan forces were involved in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and they were also fighting incursions by two rebel groups, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), on Ugandan territory.³⁴

By March 2000, the focus of the national debate had shifted to the effects of the armed Karamojong warriors on the twelve neighbouring districts.³⁵ On March 14, 2000, Mike Mukula (MP for Soroti Municipality, Katakwi district) tabled a resolution, seconded by Owiny Dollo (MP, Agago, Kitgum district), demanding that the government begin disarming the Karamojong and that armed warriors be removed from neighbouring districts.³⁶ To ensure security, the UPDF was asked to deploy along the external borders with Western Kenya and South Sudan and along internal borders between Karamoja and neighbouring districts in a containment strategy reminiscent of the colonial closure of the region. The parliamentary debate on the issue was heated and extended beyond the motion tabled. It demonstrated a widespread criticism of the government's policy on Karamoja, in questions of development and security. The MP for Agago County, Kitgum, Owiny Dollo, one of the co-sponsors of the motion summarized:

Although this motion is called Karamoja Disarmament motion, it is in fact an indictment of the Government. It is in fact questioning the justification for having Government, given that the principle, if not the sole reason, why there is Government is the protection of life and property of its citizenry.³⁷

Once the parliamentary resolution had passed, the public discourse of the government changed. The Karamojong no longer needed guns, since the various inter-clan peace processes had failed to quell the escalating conflict in Karamoja, and the pastoralists faced no external threats. It seemed that disarmament would be necessary.

³⁴ Hon. Steven B.K. Kavuma, "Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2000-2001," (Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Defence), H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, "Address by the President of the Republic of Uganda to the Honourable Members of Parliament on "The Security Situation of Uganda",," (Kampala, Uganda: 2002).

³⁵ Parliament of Uganda, *Parliamentary Debate on the Motion of Karamoja Disarmament*, 6th Parliament, 4th Session, 2nd Meeting, 9 March 2000.

³⁶ Parliament of Uganda, *Parliamentary Debate on the Resolution on Karamojong Disarmament*, 6th Parliament, 4th Session, 2nd Meeting, 14 March 2000.

³⁷ "K'jong need more than apologies," *The Monitor*, 21 August 2000.

In reality, the government was keenly aware of the paradoxical security situation of the Karamojong. The pastoralists were both victims and perpetrators of insecurity:

In 2001, our department [Legal Advisory Services, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs] gave an advisory on the legal aspects of disarmament. Gun ownership can be legal, but here guns are illegally acquired and possessed. The enforcement of the Firearms Act is not possible in Karamoja. Here the jurisprudence (law) is more *de facto* than *de jure*. Because of the vastness of the territory, there is no policing...The government has no capacity to police the borders, especially with Sudan. People here sell goats and cows for guns there. The manpower and facilitation (provision of logistics, financing) are lacking. It is necessary for the Karamojong to defend themselves. This is recognized at the policy level, but not in terms of the law.³⁸

In order to address this particular situation, several suggestions were made by the various public and political consultations. The Karamoja Parliamentary Group recommended a “complete overhaul of the existing security infrastructure in Karamoja”. This would include: the redeployment of 200 Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTUs) soldiers per sub-county; the return to abandoned police outposts by the ASTUs; and the deployment of UPDF along border crossing points with Sudan and Kenya.³⁹ Furthermore they advocated the “establishment of a more adequate judicial response to cattle raiding” and “the disbanding of the concentrated kraal cluster system of settlement, to be replaced by a more dispersed mode of settlement as to prevent the organization of large-scale raids”.⁴⁰ Dr. Limlim also suggested a reorganization of the security system by prioritizing external border security and by employing 600 LDUs with registered guns per sub-county, “organized under a unified command system, trained in security matters as well as politically, properly equipped with logistical support and backed up by the UPDF and located in areas that are both strategic and that have economic potential”. According to his vision, these LDUs and their family would provide the basis for a rural economic transformation, through the formation of new, widely dispersed settlements, linked by infrastructure improvements and economic diversification.⁴¹

³⁸ Interview with ADM 8.

³⁹ Pax Christi Netherlands, “Voluntary disarmament of pastoralists: an integrated, phased, community-based strategy,” pg10.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., pg12.

The various Karamojong suggestions seemed to favour militias or non-state security solutions:

It's necessary for them (pastoralists) to have weapons if their neighbours are still armed. To have a 'balance of terror', if the government can't provide security. Now people are indisciplined with their weapons. If there is gun possession by disciplined, trained people, like the LDUs, then we don't have to depend on the government to provide security.⁴²

Others, including Ugandan MPs, have questioned the legality of these auxiliary forces.⁴³ Pax Christi, typifying the concerns of international donors, was circumspect about the role of para-military forces. They raised several questions regarding the relations between the para-military forces and the other security institutions, such as the police and UPDF. Pax Christi felt that voluntary disarmament would only be achieved "if the state resumes its role as provider of security to the Karamojong".⁴⁴ The importance of the perception of security and state-society relations has been noted by Dr. Sami Faltas, a disarmament practitioner:

People will be more inclined to give up their guns if they believe: they can provide for their needs without resorting to violence; they will be treated with dignity and respect; they are safe from robbery, attack and extortion; they can rely on the support of those around them; the authorities will protect them; the authorities will respect their rights and liberties; and the authorities will enforce the law.⁴⁵

As explained by one Ugandan bureaucrat responsible for small arms issues, the government was sensitive to the security needs of the Karamojong:

The government plan was to bolster security for the Karamojong against hostile neighbouring groups (local raiders and external groups from Sudan and Kenya), to fill the security gap when weapons were handed in. The government did strengthen border security by placing troops along the border to reduce arms inflows and movement, as well as blocking cross-border raids. However, there are many other challenges demanding the government's attention, such as the Kony War.⁴⁶

Although the Ugandan government demonstrated an awareness that the provision of security would be a factor in the success of the disarmament exercise, it seems likely that the problems of providing

⁴² Interview with REP 6.

⁴³ The legality of the auxiliary forces will be dealt with in greater detail in the section on The Role of the Government. Interview with ADM 7, SEC 2.

⁴⁴ Pax Christi Netherlands, "Voluntary disarmament of pastoralists: an integrated, phased, community-based strategy," pg16.

⁴⁵ Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2002* pg304.

⁴⁶ Interview with SEC 10.

security were not only pragmatic but also conceptual. *Whose* security was concerned and *what* did this notion of security entail? Clearly the notions of security underlying the weapons collection program were based primarily on traditional state-centric assumptions, such as threat assessment including identifiable foreign actors, the penetration of territory, and quantifiable numbers of weapons collected. I would argue that a more relevant understanding of security in this instance for the conception of sustainable disarmament should have originated from the community whose members were expected to surrender their arms. Statistics from the Ugandan Human Rights Commission show that in public consultations on the disarmament program in Karamoja 90% of the concerns expressed by the local population were related to their security and the deployment of the the UPDF.⁴⁷

Despite the use of human security language for small arms issues by the Uganda government, the ideas did not translate into practice during the disarmament program. The government did not integrate concerns for human security (socio-economic, environmental, personal, community survival), and gender disaggregated notions of security into the planning or implementation of the exercise. This had devastating effects for the local residents of Karamoja and the women in particular, who defined security for themselves as freedom of movement, increased access to education for their families and assistance to deal with stress such as famine and drought.⁴⁸ The weapons collection program also did little to improve the lot of men, who defined their security interests primarily in terms of peace and their ability to keep cattle.⁴⁹ Because of the predominant ideal of masculinity in Karamoja, which is fundamentally tied to notions about men as protectors, disarmament was experienced as a kind of emasculation. It undermined both their social status and the militarized sexual identity which is held as an ideal: that of a heterosexual adult male, who is a brave and successful warrior; one who is able to protect his many wives, children and cattle. Some men were taunted by their peers for surrendering their weapons to the government. It was claimed

⁴⁷ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights," pg50.

⁴⁸ Interviews with CIV 5, CIV 7, CIV 9.

⁴⁹ These definitions of security by men and women are based on findings from my field research.

that in doing so they had become ‘as powerless as women’.⁵⁰ This logic stressed that a man had no right to give away the (potential) wealth and means of protecting his family. The ultimate humiliation for many men was their inability to protect their family from beatings, rape and loss of cattle, and the banning of their traditional cloth, the suka, especially throughout the period of the forced disarmament. By giving in their weapons and returning the monopoly of the use of force to the state, the men of Karamoja were supposed to place their security in the hands of the state. However, as this chapter will demonstrate the poor planning and implementation of the militia initiative and the unfortunate coincidence of the disarmament exercise with Operation Iron Fist, which reduced the army’s effectiveness in dealing with increased raiding, means that the state failed to meet expectations that it could protect the lives and property of the Karamojong.

b) Implementation of the theory of practical disarmament

The extent to which the government, specifically the President and the managing officers of the UPDF, integrated the concepts of participatory, development-led, and human security-oriented disarmament is debateable. Although, there is no doubt that government representatives capably adopted the language of these concepts in their discourse on disarmament. Furthermore, the unprecedented levels of public debate surrounding the weapons collection program led to very high expectations amongst certain sectors of the public, particularly those involved in or influenced by community based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs. These expectations were not always met during the practical implementation of the program.

i) Phase I: Voluntary disarmament

After several false starts beginning in March 2000, when the government declared that a comprehensive disarmament programme in Karamoja would be initiated following the motion passed in Parliament, the weapons collection program finally got underway on the 2nd of December 2001. The first phase, originally a one month amnesty to surrender guns voluntarily, was eventually

⁵⁰ Interviews with NGO 9, NGO 4.

extended to the 15th of February, due to intense lobbying of the government by locally based NGOs. This period was characterized by the active mobilization of pro-disarmament sectors of society, including non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and some traditional and elected leaders. Women in particular were active in advocating for disarmament.

As early as October 2001, the women in Karamoja were organizing themselves and lobbying to meet with the President to voice their developmental concerns. They told him they felt marginalized, and wanted improvements in infrastructure, education, security and legal council.⁵¹ The meeting was successful and unique in that it brought the concerns of the grassroots right up to the President. Later during the voluntary phase of the disarmament program, the President used this strategy of meeting with various social groups: *ngaberu* (women), *ngikasikou* (elders), *ngikaracuna* (youth warriors), to address their specific demands and concerns in order to encourage disarmament. President Museveni appealed to the women of Karamojong to take a leading role in the weapons collection program, as it was the only way to “peace, unity and development”.⁵² Many women responded, by attending meetings and lobbying their husband and sons individually at home. Almost all of the women I interviewed claimed to have been very positive about disarmament before the initiation of the second or forceful phase of disarmament. Polls conducted before the weapons collection program in 2000 revealed that the *ngaberu* and *ngikasikou* overwhelmingly supported the de-commissioning of weapons (88%), while 82% of *ngapesur* (young women) supported the initiative.⁵³ The reasons for advocating for the surrender of arms varied. Some women were weary of the effects on their family, the indiscriminate attacks on women and children during cattle raids, the loss of life and cattle and ensuing poverty; they felt that the weapons were now doing more harm than good. Others were concerned about gun violence

⁵¹ Interview with REP 5.

⁵² Parliament of Uganda, *Parliamentary Debate on the Customs Management Amendment Bill*, 7th Parliament, 1st Session, 20 September 2001.

⁵³ Amongst the *ngikaracuna*, pro-disarmament opinion fell to only 32%, with 58% warriors claiming that they would resist disarmament. A full breakdown by clan and social groups is available in Action for Development of Local Communities in conjunction with USAID, "Feasible, Participatory, Peaceful and Sustainable Disarmament of the Karamojong," pg11.

within their communities, especially due to drunken behaviour amongst men.⁵⁴ One woman told me she wanted greater security; she wanted to be free to go to neighbouring districts for household needs.⁵⁵

Whilst most of the women took a very active and risky role in the first phase, a few of the women told me that as they themselves were not handling the guns, they did not think that the weapons collection program was relevant to them. They were not involved in the deliberations regarding disarmament. This opinion was, however, rarely expressed. The majority of women I spoke with claimed that the decision to disarm was taken at the family level and usually at least one gun was kept for insurance purposes, although one man told me that the men of his village threatened the women with violence when the women told them to hand in their firearms.⁵⁶

Attacks on women did in fact become a common occurrence later on, when the raiding recommenced and many families lost their cattle; wives and mothers were blamed for convincing their husbands and sons to surrender their weapons. Many women had actually been the ones to hand in the weapons especially to the army and Civil-Military Operation Centres (CMOCs).⁵⁷ Some men feared being arrested (although a general amnesty had been declared for the voluntary phase), others felt that women were less likely to be interrogated about the origin of the gun, other weapons at home or the poor state of many of the firearms surrendered.⁵⁸ Women, as individuals and in women's CBOs, were also active in advocating for peace, despite the poor financing of their activities and the lack of facilitation to meet as a regional collective.⁵⁹ They composed and sang songs about disarmament that became well-known, building on the local tradition of peace crusades and peace choirs. In Moroto, women's groups mounted a play about the dangers of small arms, which was performed within their communities. These activities by women were complimented by

⁵⁴ Although domestic violence is acknowledged to be very common, none of the women spoke of domestic violence with a gun. It is apparently still a taboo to threaten or to use a weapon on a member of your own clan and family. Interviews with CIV 5, CIV 7, CIV 9, OTHER 2.

⁵⁵ Interview with CIV 9.

⁵⁶ Interview with CIV 4.

⁵⁷ The CMOCs will be treated in greater depth in a later section of this chapter. Interviews with REP 5, NGO 14.

⁵⁸ Interview with NGO 8.

⁵⁹ Interview with REP 1.

similar initiatives by other CBOs and NGOs to inform the pastoralists about the disarmament program.

Whilst the various civil society organisations busily mobilised the local communities for the weapons collection program, there was little co-ordination with the central government that was supposed to be organising the exercise. One NGO worker explained:

In mid-November (2001), the President came to Moroto. Early on there was skepticism, then interest in the idea when the President came and camped out for the consultations. The civil society organizations got Phase One extended. Museveni was open to a conciliatory approach...He's very popular here. There was very good support for the NRM during the 2000 elections, so Museveni was willing to be conciliatory. He did say though that the army would retaliate if it was hit"⁶⁰

The President launched the disarmament program to great fanfare on the 2nd of December, 2001. A week later a document from Museveni regarding the "guidelines on mobilization for the disarmament exercise" was sent to all of the political leaders and military commanders in the Karamoja region. The Presidential circular was the only official policy plan for the weapons collection program publicised. And likely it was the only written guidelines for those implementing the exercise, including the UPDF.⁶¹ The document stated "You should inform the Karimojong that the exercise is only intended to remove illegal guns...It is not intended to disarm the region and deny security to them."⁶² In the circular, the President promised to guard the borders through military patrols, and permanent barracks and the construction of a road along the Kenya-Uganda frontier. He also ordered the eventual establishment of 146 Local Defence Units per sub-county, with a mandate to protect against inter-clan raids and re-inforce other security agencies operation in the region.⁶³ The document briefly discusses the incentive scheme, but in no great detail. Most importantly, it stated "...although the army is under strict instructions to use minimum force and

⁶⁰ Interview with NGO 7.

⁶¹ One source source exclaimed "In Uganda, the Presidential Directive is more legal than law." Interview with ADM 7.

⁶² H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, "Presidential Circular Regarding Guidelines on Mobilization for the Disarmament Exercise in Karamoja Region," (State House, Government of Uganda, 2001).

⁶³ Ibid.

ensure discipline in this exercise, whoever resists or is unco-operative will be dealt with according to the law.”⁶⁴

The first phase, originally a one month amnesty to surrender guns voluntarily, was largely successful. During this time, a total of 7676 weapons were surrendered voluntarily.⁶⁵ Due to intense lobbying of the government by locally based NGOs, the amnesty was eventually extended to the 15th of February 2002. A report by a local missionary worker stated “The extension of the deadline of handing in the gun is seen by many Karamojong as a sign of weakness by the government.”⁶⁶ The pastoralists interpreted the delay of the forceful period of disarmament as an inability of the UPDF to enact the Presidential circular. Even during the voluntary period of disarmament, there were a number of raids and counter-raids, especially targetting communities that had responded positively to the calls for disarmament. “In all of these incidents, the response of the UPDF was perceived to be slow and therefore not protecting the lives and property of the Karimojong. Such incidents undermine the (credibility of the) exercise.”⁶⁷ The most damaging raids occurred on the 16th and 31st of December 2001, when the Jie raided massively the Bokora, who had largely complied with the programme.⁶⁸ To restore community confidence, the UPDF launched ‘Operation Restore Hope’ on 3rd-4th January 2002, where the army traced and retrieved Bokora cattle raided by the Jie and the Turkana from Kenya.

The general impression at the end of the voluntary period was that the exercise had been initiated at the behest of the President as a personal project. However, as he only stayed in the region for a few weeks, there was very poor coordination amongst the various implementers (UPDF, government-Ministries, District, Local, UHRC) once the programme actually got underway. Outside of the Presidential circular, there were no written instructions on procedures for

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ This included the extended deadline period. “Uganda: Army to begin forcible disarmament of Karamojong,” *IRIN*, 25 February 2002.

⁶⁶ Fr. Franz Pfaff, “Report on the illegal guns of the Karimojong during the year 2001,” (Moroto: UHRC, 2002), pg2.

⁶⁷ “Status Report on Community Sensitisation in conjunction with the Government of Uganda's ‘Disarmament Exercise’ in Karamoja,” (Kampala: UHRC, HRDP-DANIDA, 2002), pg22.

⁶⁸ See Annex 2 for disaggregated statistics of weapons collected in the various communities.

disarmament from the central government. This resulted in rumours and sometimes conflicting messages from local leaders who were politicking to their local constituency. There was very little coordination with the donors or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who has experience organising micro-disarmament in other developing countries. There was also no advance preparation for logistics (e.g. transport), or the incentives. In fact the incentives had not been totally decided upon until the end of December, neither were there any provisions made for the printing and distribution of the certificates of compliance.⁶⁹ Much of the coordination and community aspects of the programme (e.g. incentives) were organized by the UHRC and DANIDA; a lack of leadership from the central government, in particular from the Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, Peter Lokeris severely compromised the results of the initiative. Furthermore, for many of the community-based organisations, the disarmament was a 'learn as you go' project; they were constantly taking stock of their activities and the exercise in general.⁷⁰

ii) CMOCs and Human Rights Training

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) was extremely active throughout the disarmament exercise, often in co-ordination with the Human Rights Desk of the Ugandan army. The role of the UHRC during the weapons collection program was essential and somewhat unique. The UHRC played an important part in directing and monitoring the disarmament exercise, especially acting as a mediator between the community-based organisations and the military. However, because there was very little involvement by international actors, the UHRC often played the role that donors or implementing agencies would perform in practical disarmament initiatives, such as writing mission and status reports.⁷¹ They were also involved in the disbursement of a major part of the non-military funding for the program, for example producing the disarmament

⁶⁹ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Moroto Auxiliary Office Status Report on the Disarmament Program," (Moroto: UHRC, 2001).

⁷⁰ Interviews with NGO 2, NGO 5, NGO 6, NGO 8.

⁷¹ Much of the funding for the UHRC activities however originated from the European Union and DANIDA's Human Rights and Democratisation Programme. Interview with NGO 21.

certificates. The UHRC led the implementation in some cases, by coordinating the local stakeholders and preparing work plans and budgets for the voluntary period after the Presidential Circular. The two major initiatives of the UHRC and UPDF Human Rights Desk during the disarmament program were the human rights sensitisation campaign and the Civil-Military Operation Centres.

The sensitisation campaign was hastily organised to coincide with the voluntary period of the weapons collection program. The trained human rights monitors disseminated information regarding:

- a) the rights of citizens most often violated during times of conflict;
- b) where residents could complain and from whom they could get information;
- c) the procedure of the voluntary disarmament (to whom and where to surrender their weapons;
- d) and the timing of the second phase of forceful disarmament.⁷²

Aided by local community-based organisations such as the Lutheran World Federation, Action Aid, and the NGO forums of Matoro, Kotido and Nakapirpirit districts, the sensitisation campaign was able to reach the village and kraal level.⁷³ By the end of December 2001, the initiative had made contact with 20,424 people in 75 meetings held in kraals and villages; 26% of those sensitised were women.⁷⁴ During the sensitisation campaign, the rate at which guns were surrendered increased noticeably, and the steep drop recorded between the 4th and 17th of January 2002 coincided with a pause the campaign.⁷⁵ The UHRC also learned several things from the public consultations, 90% of the concerns of the local population were related to their security and the deployment of the UPDF.⁷⁶ And despite the various workshops in the district capitals and Kampala, communities felt that they were not involved in the planning of the program.⁷⁷ The sensitisation of the Karamojong was innovative and useful for those residents that it reached. However, the campaign was only able

⁷² Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Moroto Auxiliary Office Status Report on the Disarmament Program."

⁷³ The kraals (cattle camps) were extremely important targets as they are the homes of many of the the youth warriors and thus the gun users.

⁷⁴ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "UHRC Annual Report 2001," pg81.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pg82.

⁷⁶ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Karamoja: Searching for Peace and Human Rights," pg50.

⁷⁷ "Status Report on Community Sensitisation," pg22.

to contact 3% of the total population of Karamoja.⁷⁸ Even by the government's own admission the sensitisation for disarmament was inadequate, they noted that there was no radio programme that could have been used to educate a larger segment of the population.⁷⁹

The Civil-Military Operation Centres were set up during the extension of Phase I at the initiative of the Uganda Human Rights Commission to continue to foster strong civil-military coordination. The CMOCs were innovations in partnerships between the UPDF army, civil society organizations, religious leaders, the UHRC, and DANIDA's Human Rights and Democratization Program. They had a mandate to report on the progress of the disarmament program and to record human rights abuses. Women had asked for a women's desk in the CMOCs, but this never materialized. The functions of the centres were:

- a) to coordinate with the district teams of civil society, local government and traditional leaders, including during the mobilisation and sensitisation of the local communities;
- b) to assist anybody displaced by disarmament;
- c) to receive complaints against the military and to take remedial action, including referral to the UHRC, Police or any other relevant government department;
- d) to act as a harmonisation point for civilian and military matters.⁸⁰

According to the UHRC the CMOCs were established in order to:

- a) provide weight and legitimacy that the disarmament was not a military operation, but rather an exercise to "rid the region of a vice";
- b) provide a basis for continuing civil-military cooperation;
- c) provide effective steps to prevent and forestall human rights abuses;
- d) enhance transparency in issues of human rights documentation, especially in incidents when the UPDF was involved;
- e) address the issues of ordinary citizens and form the vital link between peacebuilding initiatives and potential conflict situations.⁸¹

Few of the people that I interviewed at the village level had heard of the Civil-Military Operation Centres, where human rights abuses could be reported, as the CMOCs were located only in the

⁷⁸ My own calculations based on the number of residents sensitised and the estimated total population of Karamoja.

⁷⁹ Government of Uganda, "Defence and Internal Affairs Committee Report on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2002-2003," (2003), pg8.

⁸⁰ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Civil Military Operation Centres: Karamoja Joint Lessons Learnt," (Kampala: UHRC, 2002), pg2, Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Review Meeting of the Karamoja Sensitisation Programme on Voluntary Disarmament" (Moroto, 2 January 2002).

⁸¹ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Moroto Auxiliary Office Status Report on the Disarmament Program," pg7.

administrative town centres of Kotido, Moroto and Namalu.⁸² Many of the local residents were confused about the purpose of the centres as the institutional role of the UHRC was not well distinguished from the UPDF.⁸³ Those who did use the CMOCs complained that often they were only staffed by army officers, or that the army personnel tended to dominate the civilians in the use of the available facilities for the CMOCs, in particular transport.⁸⁴ And not a single centre had a female representative, despite the fact that local women's organizations had requested them during initial community consultations.⁸⁵ This was an oversight as the UHRC found that the women were more likely to report violations of their human rights at the CMOCs.⁸⁶ Furthermore, there were no provisions to ensure privacy, especially for those reporting abuse of a sexual nature.⁸⁷

An internal review of the Civil-Military Operation Centres by the UHRC in November 2002 found that while the centres were well-received by the public at the beginning, their reputation and effectiveness declined over time. This was due to the unfulfilled promises of the distribution of incentives for weapons surrendered, ignorance about the role of the CMOCs, and the failure of the CMOC staff to provide feedback regarding reports made to the centres about human rights abuse.⁸⁸ The efficiency of the CMOCs in dealing with human rights complaints was also compromised by the lack of an efficient judiciary systems and operational police force in the Karamoja region.⁸⁹ The review also found that many of the problems that the centres experienced could be attributed to a "lack of capacity in term of both human resources and budgets."⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the Civil-Military Operation Centres were a positive development during the 2001-2002 weapons collection program in Karamoja. This initiative by the Uganda Human Rights Commission attempted to operationalize some of the ideas in contemporary literature on practical

⁸² Interviews with CIV 4, CIV 5, CIV 6, CIV 7, CIV 8, CIV 9.

⁸³ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Civil Military Operation Centres: Karamoja Joint Lessons Learnt," pg25.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pg26.

⁸⁵ Interview with REP 5.

⁸⁶ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Civil Military Operation Centres: Karamoja Joint Lessons Learnt," pg21.

⁸⁷ Iseult Kestelyn, "Peace and Development in Karamoja: Analysis of the Local Women's Organizations," (Pax Christi, 2002), pg8.

⁸⁸ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Civil Military Operation Centres: Karamoja Joint Lessons Learnt," pg29.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pg24.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pg28.

disarmament. It supported voluntary and participatory disarmament by encouraging the involvement of some sections of civil society, however it also marginalized women from contributing to this initiative. The centres, despite their problems in practice, symbolized a greater willingness on the part of the Ugandan army to cooperate with non-military organisations and civil society in disarming the Karamojong. This awareness of the advantages of good civil-military relations was quite an attitudinal shift as the armed forces had historically viewed disarmament as a forceful military exercise.⁹¹ Finally, the CMOCs contributed to the idea that those who were to be secured by the weapons collection program were not only the state and neighbouring tribes, but the subjects of the disarmament, the Karamojong. By sensitising the local community about the program, dealing with cases of human rights abuses and treating issues arising from the exercise such as forced displacement, the UHRC had attempted to return the security focus of the disarmament initiative back to the local communities.

2) ...The disastrous consequences of an ill-suited program

a) The short-comings of the 'plan' for disarmament

According to the then Minister of State for Internal Affairs, Kiyingi Namusoke, the 2001-2002 weapons collection program in Karamoja, mandated by the resolution passed in Parliament, was to be “comprehensive” based on concerns for development and security.⁹² However, in the end, there was an apparent lack of will on the part of the government to carry it through in a systematic and sustainable manner. At first, the government delayed the launching of the disarmament program, citing the slow and complex nature of the demands for security and development, such as increased border control, assurance of food security and the provision of water sources and dams, until this position was politically untenable due to the large-scale raids by ngikaracuna in districts neighbouring Karamoja. Then, when it was finally implemented, there was no serious attempt to

⁹¹ Interview with NGO 21.

⁹² *Parliamentary Debate on the Report on Katakwi IDPs*, pg357.

link long-term socio-economic development with the disarmament program. Of critical importance is the fact that the program was severely compromised by limited funding, and was tainted by corruption.⁹³ In practice, incentives such as ox ploughs and iron sheets were given to leaders, not those who needed the rewards for income-generation and sustenance. And the provision of maize flour proved to be a short-term solution and not a means of supporting a family – unlike a gun.

i) The role of the government (disarmament as an event not a process)

The original plan for ‘comprehensive disarmament’ called for in the March 2000 parliamentary motion was based on a ‘weapons for development’ model; it was envisioned to be a kind of Marshall Plan for the pastoralist region. It was to cost Ush 3.4 billion (\$2 million) over several years and would include:

...(the) resettlement of the Karamoja communities in fertile areas which have remained fallow due to insecurity, provision of basic social services, provision of water for human consumption, livestock development including valley dams and economic purposes; free and compulsory education up to secondary level and scholarship for those in tertiary institutions; economic diversification; infrastructure development which includes, power, all weather roads, telephone and the construction of administrative centres where appropriate.⁹⁴

The Ugandan government responded to the parliamentary motion by setting up an inter-ministerial committee coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister. The committee responsible for the planning of the disarmament program was to include: the Ministries of Defence; Internal Affairs; Agriculture and Animals; Works, Transportation and Housing; Health; Education; and the Ministry of State for Karamoja Affairs.⁹⁵ After the popular uproar caused by the violent Ngariam raid President Museveni decided to “drop the original plan so as to expeditiously affect the disarmament of the rustlers”.⁹⁶ In effect, the President decided to opt for a voluntary weapons collection program, a strategy that he perceived would be cheaper and faster. He blamed the delayed implementation on

⁹³ Major donor countries were solicited by the President, but hesitated to directly fund a program which would involve militia forces. Those donors which did contribute to the disarmament exercise did so indirectly by funding the CMOCs or by making token contributions to the initiatives program. In the end, the disarmament exercise was funded from the national budget. Interviews with OTHER 4, NGO 21, REP 8, OTHER 7.

⁹⁴ “Karamoja disarmament: price of political & economic failures,” *Uganda Confidential*, 17-23 March 2000, pg4.

⁹⁵ Interview with ADM 7.

⁹⁶ Edward Ojulu, *Karimojong Arms: Govt Drops \$2m Plan* (12 November 2001 [accessed 25 August 2006]); available from: <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/19112001/Regional/Regional7.html>.

an unrealistic budget drawn up by the Ministry of Defence, one that the national budget could not support. Museveni's comments to a local newspaper seemed to suggest that a large budget was not needed rather "The resources are there. What has been lacking is coordination."⁹⁷

With the spector of an upcoming national referendum on multipartyism looming on the political horizon, and facing a swelling public outcry from local communities neighbouring the pastoralists, President Museveni decided to publicly take control of the situation. He travelled to Karamoja and stayed two weeks to inaugurate the disarmament exercise. The President promised that "...once all illegal weapons were collected, the government would begin to build schools, organise immunisation programmes, construct valley dams and treat cattle diseases in the region" and "women's groups would benefit from micro-finance projects".⁹⁸ He encouraged the Karamojong to surrender their weapons peacefully and those that did so would be "recorded as responsible citizens by being given priority in the government's development plans."⁹⁹ The President also addressed the security concerns of the local residents by further promising that mobile units from the UPDF would be sent to the region to track down cattle rustlers and patrol the international borders.¹⁰⁰ The problem was that there was no 'plan' for the process of disarmament or for the development which was supposed to follow. One Karamojong MP lamented "Everyone accepted the disarmament program based on the resolution passed in Parliament, but there were supposed to be development programs which followed. The implementation of the program was poor, the government didn't put in enough financing or logistic planning."¹⁰¹ This view was shared by one security officer involved:

⁹⁷ "Uganda: Museveni sets target on Karamojong disarmament," *IRIN*, 31 October 2001.

⁹⁸ "Museveni appeals to K'jong on guns," *New Vision*, 17 December 2001, "Uganda: Karamojong start handing over illegal guns," *IRIN*, 7 December 2001.

⁹⁹ It is amusing to note that the only person who publicly challenged the President about his promises linked to the disarmament exercise was a high school student in Moroto Town named Francis Lotiang. The boy called Museveni "a liar", exclaiming "You promised us a tarmac road, electricity and bursaries, but you have not fulfilled your promises. How do you expect us now to persuade our parents to hand over their guns?" "East Africa: Turkana leave Karamoja to avoid disarmament," *IRIN*, 27 November 2001, *The Last Word* (The East African, 17 December 2001 [accessed 20 January 2002]); available from: <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/25122001/Opinion/LastWord.html>.

¹⁰⁰ "Museveni appeals to K'jong on guns."

¹⁰¹ Interview with REP 2.

When the Parliamentary motion was passed, there were no plans made for disarmament. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was funding the program, but there was no one in the army to handle the money. The funding was mishandled. The UPDF was not well facilitated... The Presidential Directive was given without any plan, it was ad hoc. There was a lack of coordination in the first phase between the 3rd Division Command on the ground, the Chief Political Commissar (Kaihura) and the Human Rights Desk. There was no one to coordinate the whole disarmament process, we had to solve problems as they came up.¹⁰²

The actual collection of weapons was initiated spontaneously at the behest of the President. He envisioned that the exercise would be a rapid and visible means of reducing tension between the agriculturalist and pastoralist communities in north-eastern Uganda. However, this ill-planned 'event' would later exacerbate relations between the various tribes, rather than address the underlying causes of conflict between the communities through a 'process' of conflict resolution.

The Ugandan parliamentary debate in 2000 on disarmament in Karamoja revealed the extent to which the polemic could become dangerously tribal. In the course of the debate, Col. William Omara, former UPA rebel and Minister in Obote II's government who organized the Home Guards, used inflammatory rhetoric to incite suspicion of the government's 'conspiracy' against the Itesot by allowing the Karamojong to be armed in order to raid and destock the Itesot.¹⁰³ Omara was exploiting Museveni's electoral weakness in Teso, however it was effective as the government was forced to act in order to be perceived publicly as 'getting tough' on the Karamojong or at least treating their neighbours in an egalitarian manner. In order to curry favour, in anticipation of a referendum on multipartyism, the government's response was to arm the communities surrounding Karamoja.

Demobilized militiamen and soldiers were armed by the President as Local Defense Units (LDUs), under the command of the UPDF.¹⁰⁴ The logic was that the LDUs were defensive forces only, not to be used for offensive purposes. (It is unclear if they were primarily mandated to fight the LRA or Karamojong raiders as well.) This remains the government's discourse today, although

¹⁰² Interview with SEC 2.

¹⁰³ Felix Osike, "Karimojong guns raise dust: Speaker after speaker called for the immediate disarmament of the marauding warriors," *The New Vision*, 18 March 2000.

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Angura, "1400 men recruited to fight K'jong," *The New Vision*, 7 April 2000, Muzungyo, "Referendum: Kapchorwa wants guns," *The New Vision*? November 1999.

the legal status of these groups is ambiguous and no plans have been organized for their eventual demobilization. Despite the mobilization of LDUs in all districts surrounding Karamoja, very little sensitization was carried out in Karamoja about the objectives of these forces. As a result, the LDUs were perceived as a threat by the Karamojong warriors who believed that these tribal militias would be used to raid their cattle, as had been the case in the past.¹⁰⁵ Again, the government's response to this uncertainty was to also arm the Karamojong by setting up LDUs in the region in July 2000.

The Ugandan press was critical of an approach which favoured violence instead of dialogue, increased militarism and weakened democracy (by not using elected leaders to resolve the political crisis). The government policy of containment and balance of firepower was severely criticized in particular by the independent newspaper, *The Monitor*, and most prominently by the Bishop of Kitgum Diocese, Macleod Baker Ochola II.¹⁰⁶ He claimed that the state was acting unconstitutionally by not directly taking responsibility for the security of its citizens and their property.¹⁰⁷ Others, such as donors, were critical of the potential for escalating tribal conflict and the use of non-state military forces:

The LDUs are a legalization of guns...Nationally, there is a dangerous trend that raiding is being dealt with by the tribal militias...It's a short term solution, in the long term, given our political history, the tribal militias are quite dangerous. They aren't trained, there is a potential for another rebellion. What is their legal status? Who controls them? These questions haven't been answered. Neither the local nor national government controls them.¹⁰⁸

Some of the concerns were even voiced internally by Members of Parliament belonging to the ruling NRM regime.¹⁰⁹ The government was aware of the legitimacy of these arguments, however it argued that under the constitution, the government had the power to organize an auxiliary force to

¹⁰⁵ John Banalya, "Lokeris warns on arms," *The New Vision*, 6 April 2000, Nathalie Gomes, "Intra and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Southern Karamoja-Uganda," *L'Afrique Orientale*, (2002): pg254, Peter Kamuron, "International Borders and Security in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts" (paper presented at the National Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 1994), pg2.

¹⁰⁶ "More guns not best way to end K'jong 'terror'," *The Monitor*, 4 April 2000.

¹⁰⁷ Eric Lakidi, "Bishop blasts govt over guns," *The New Vision*, 8 April 2000.

¹⁰⁸ Interviews with NGO 21, OTHER 7.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with ADM 7.

provide security for its citizens, especially if the army was ‘over-stretched’.¹¹⁰ Later in 2003, a high-level Defence and Internal Affairs Committee addressed these concerns in a parliamentary report:

The Committee appreciates the mobilization and arming of the local communities to fight rebels. The extent of the arming of the local communities, however has to be seriously regulated and be under the close supervision of the UPDF. The Committee notes an element of misconception of the change in the balance of firepower arising out of the arming of the Arrow groups in Teso region. Some people in Karamoja region seem to think that they will be the next target of the Arrow group once the LRA is defeated.¹¹¹

A law to establish the reserve force should be made to help define the command structure, recruitment, training, deployment, welfare and other attendant needs and requirements. The reserve force should eventually become a replacement for the local fighting groups.¹¹²

Besides legal arguments, the arming of neighbouring communities has proven to be problematic for more practical reasons. The establishment and financing of the Local Defense Units was not well-planned. Furthermore with the oversight of international donors on defence expenditures, and their reluctance to condone armed non-state actors, financing of the LDUs has been difficult. Even today, these militiamen have no legal status, are not provided with food and transportation, and often are paid as late as 5 months in arrears.¹¹³ Many within the LDUs were involuntarily drafted and sent to fight the Lord’s Resistance Army; some of these men have deserted and returned home.¹¹⁴ It is no wonder then that they command little respect within their communities or that, being armed, angry and ostracised, they have increasingly returned to criminal activities as a civilian. Those with an interest in keeping their weapons for criminal purposes can claim that they still need to keep their weapons for self-defense, as the Ugandan state is still incapable or unwilling to protect all of its citizens. In a region with high levels of gun proliferation, this was the original logic why the NRM government tolerated armed Karamojong warriors, as a *de facto* exception to the national firearms

¹¹⁰ Interview with Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda, Minister of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kampala, 28-11-03.

¹¹¹ Government of Uganda, "Defence and Internal Affairs Committee Report on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2003-2004," (2004), pg13.

¹¹² Ibid., pg14.

¹¹³ Interviews with SEC 3, SEC 7.

¹¹⁴ Interview with OTHER 1, OTHER 3.

legislation of Uganda.¹¹⁵ It is for this reason that actively arming opposing communities is not a sustainable, long-term solution which favours an eventual disarmament.

However, even a UPDF officer well-acquainted with the situation in Karamoja admitted that the best possible solution for the pastoralists may be to remain armed in the short-term, in order to ensure their security independently of the state:

...Another possibility is to let the elders register the guns, then to disarm those who are irresponsible with their guns. Total disarmament may not be practical. The neighbours, such as the Langi, Sebei, Itesot, however would never allow this as a policy. It would have to be unstated.¹¹⁶

This seems to suggest that the NRM government tolerates a pro-gun approach to community security. Such a seemingly illogical policy may be more rational when one considers the government's claims that the UPDF is under-funded for their threat assessment.¹¹⁷ In fact, the government is dependent on community-based security systems, such as the Arrow Group, to fill in the gaps of an army stretched to its limits. This is the primary reason why the UPDF was unable to deploy fully along all of Uganda's borders with neighbouring Kenya and Sudan, despite pledging to do so as part of the disarmament exercise in Karamoja.¹¹⁸ It is also why the UPDF was unable to complete the weapons reduction program when Operation Iron Fist was launched in the spring of 2002:

The disarmament program was conceived as a security solution to the problems in neighbouring districts. Previous governments had attempted containment of Karamoja. This policy was wrong for Karamoja. Now we are starting to concentrate on the internal issues in Karamoja. But the government is also concerned with external threats from the ADF in the Congo, the LRA. So Karamoja is not such a high priority; this is why we had to abandon the disarmament program in 2002.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Wairagala Wakabi, *Uganda MPs Want Warriors Disarmed Now* (20 March 2000 [accessed 2 October 2004]); available from: <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/20032000/Regional/Regional15.html>.

¹¹⁶ Interview with SEC 2.

¹¹⁷ Interview SEC 6.

¹¹⁸ Defence and Internal Affairs Committee, "Report of the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2002-2003," (Kampala: Parliament of Uganda), pg9, Nathalie Gomes and Kennedy Mkutu, "Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Building local capacity for peace and development in Karamoja, Uganda," (The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and Pax Christi Netherlands, 2003), pg43.

¹¹⁹ Interview with ADM 7.

A separate source confirmed this assessment:

Three months into the disarmament program, the LRA attacked from South Sudan into Northern Uganda. Because most of the Ugandan soldiers were in the Congo, some of the soldiers who were conducting the disarmament were sent to fight the LRA in Northern Uganda. They were attacked at Ituri, so more UPDF soldiers had to be sent. There were only 2 battalions left in Karamoja, about 2000 soldiers, covering from Kotido to the source of the Nile [an area approximately the size of Belgium].¹²⁰

The limited capacity of the Ugandan army to provide security to its citizens, as well as the spontaneous nature of the initiation of the weapons collection program have contributed to the failure of the disarmament exercise. Despite ideas for a comprehensive program to address the security and development needs of both the Karamojong and their neighbours, the hasty manner in which the President enacted the exercise, and the lack of an organisational plan, resulted in the short-term 'event' of disarmament, rather than a sustainable process.

ii) The challenges of financing

Due to international donor restrictions on defence expenditures for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and how this money can be spent, the weapons collection program and related initiatives such as the Local Defence Units were inadequately financed. This contributed largely to the failure of the program because no sustainable means of protecting the Karamojong and their property was put into place after the surrender of their weapons. The lack of serious donor funding of the weapons reduction activities and government corruption also contributed to the failure of the plan for disarmament.

As discussed in the previous section the Ugandan government is incapable of meeting its constitutional responsibility of protecting its citizens as long as the LRA civil war is consuming vast resources. While it would be unwise for the government to admit this publicly, in reality the state is forced to rely on 'auxilliary forces' like the LDUs and other tribal militias such as the Arrow Group:

¹²⁰ Interview with OTHER 1.

These phenomena of auxiliary and reserve forces are not well understood by donors. They have unfair standards. They criticize us for the mobilization of non-professional forces; these are not large standing forces. Right now we are forced to underspend on defense. Defense only accounts for 2% of the national budget. The command forces are not well-paid or well-provided for.¹²¹

Privately, government officials blame the international community, the World Bank and other donors, for forcing budgetary restrictions on military spending (in favour of development related expenditure) and mass demobilization of the national armed forces in the early 1990s.

In 1996, during the elections, Museveni did poorly in neighbouring districts. Even though he pledged to disarm the Karamojong this pledge was not fulfilled. He is constantly reminded of this. In reality the hands of the government were tied. The World Bank was forcing DDR. There was the ADF (Rwandan) rebels in Western Uganda, the West Nile Bank Front coming from the Congo and the Sudanese government was supporting the LRA coming from South Sudan into Northern Uganda. The Karamojong took advantage of this situation to raid neighbouring districts as they left their dry season grazing...During the referendum campaign of 2000 (on multipartyism) there were again lots of complaints. This resulted in the resolution of March 2000. At this time the LDUs were not armed. The President was called a liar at a rally in Katakwi, later the LDUs were armed (by the government).¹²²

Officially, defence expenditures now constitutes 9% of the national budget, fifth in priority after the economic sector (18%), education (17.5%), public works (11%), and health (10%).¹²³ Ugandan defence spending is monitored and limited by donors, such as the United Kingdom, to 2.3% of the country's GDP, whereas average spending for countries at war hovers around the 4% mark.¹²⁴ It has even been alleged by a senior high ranking official in the Ministry of Defence that the government "hides defence money in other ministries' budgets in order to deceive donors who insist on reducing our expenditure on the army".¹²⁵ "The budgetary constraints arising from the small national resource envelope and the ceilings on the Defence Budget to 2% of GDP continues to hamper the

¹²¹ Interview with SEC 5.

¹²² Interview with OTHER 1.

¹²³ Grace Matsiko, "Defence, British Envoy Discuss Military Expenditure," *The Monitor*, 26 June 2006.

¹²⁴ For a regional comparison, the Sudan, Uganda's leading military adversary, spends almost four times as much as their southern neighbour. Even Kenya and Tanzania, both relatively peaceful countries spend more on defence than Uganda. Joshua Kato, "Defence Budget: Uganda Measures Poorly Against Others," *The New Vision*, 27 June 2006.

¹²⁵ During the 2002 offensive against the LRA, all ministries lost 20% of their operating budget to help fund Operation Iron Fist. Interview with OTHER 5, "Is Defence Giving Value for Money?" *The Monitor*, 26 June 2006, Kato, "Defence Budget: Uganda Measures Poorly Against Others."

Ministry from achieving its desired outputs. The Ministry only gets 20% of the actual resources needs.”¹²⁶

Although the disarmament program and the continued presence of the UPDF in Karamoja afterwards was severely restricted by several years of donor oversight and restriction of the Ugandan government’s defence spending, one security analyst noted:

Until July 2001, the government didn’t take the Karamoja disarmament as a priority. The LRA was being repelled by the Karamojong in an unstable region. And disarmament wasn’t in the budget; it had to wait until the next financial year 2001-2002. At least this was the official reason, but one can question the government’s commitment to disarmament of the Karamojong.¹²⁷

In rebuttal the Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs explained:

The government tried in 1987 to disarm the Karamojong, but found that it was not easy. It is a complex issue because of the relations between the Karamojong and their neighbours. The President realized that a program would be necessary. The government was trying to find an appropriate time to disarm the Karamojong. The external and internal environment is extremely important for the timing of the program. Problems of logistics and money (funding) caused the delay in implementation.¹²⁸

The government also claimed that “the depreciation of the Uganda shilling against the US dollar affected the implementation of planned activities during the (past) financial year”.¹²⁹ The government’s argument that the disarmament program was costly or that funding caused the delay in implementation are weak. One government source explained:

The weapons collection project was actually very cheap, by normal budgetary standards. It was given very little funding. But regional coordination could have defrayed the costs if it was shared by Kenya. (Minister of State for Karamoja) Lokeris’ job should have been to tell Mzee (President Museveni) that disarmament at the time and in the supposed time span was not possible given the lack of a budget.”¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Government of Uganda, "Defence and Internal Affairs Committee Report on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2003-2004," pg11.

¹²⁷ Interview NGO 8.

¹²⁸ Interview with Hon. Peter Lokeris, Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, 4-12-03.

¹²⁹ Government of Uganda, "Defence and Internal Affairs Committee Report on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2002-2003," pg4.

¹³⁰ Interview with ADM 2.

Another source within the UPDF concurred, he stated that “There was very little funding for the WCP, so that half way through the funding was exhausted. There was a break in the second phase of disarmament; it couldn’t be sustained.”¹³¹

More reasonable arguments for the problems in funding of the 2001-2002 exercise are that the Uganda government did not seek international donor funding for the program and the activities linked to disarmament were disrupted by government corruption. The abrupt nature of the launch of the program by the President did not allow the proper time for preparations by those who actually had to plan and implement the program. Although the Minister of Karamoja Affairs may boast that “The Irish, the Japanese, EU countries, USAID and others such as NORAD (Norwegian Aid Agency) were contacted. The British contributed 170 oxploughs and the EU gave 2000.”¹³² The contributions for a project of its size were negligible. One NGO Director explains:

There was a meeting with the donors after the Presidential Decree, but they didn’t want to get on board. Some of the donors were DANIDA, USAID, the Irish, and the EU. DFID didn’t seem interested. The donors didn’t realise that the program was not really well-funded. They had slashed the (Ugandan national) budget by 23%. Museveni was soliciting funding for the incentive program.¹³³

Later fourteen ambassadors met with President Museveni in Karamoja, but this did not occur until January 2002.¹³⁴ This was two months after the initiation of the program; it was not realistic to expect major funding of the program at this late stage. Some of the donors in Kampala were willing to fund parts of the program, but they were fearful for the security of their personnel.¹³⁵ Others were sceptical of the whole initiative.¹³⁶ When asked why the international community was not informed and solicited for funding in a timely manner, one civil servant closely linked to the planning replied “We didn’t think the donors would fund such a project.”¹³⁷ There is logic to this claim. At the time, in 2001, the OECD-DAC guidelines on what would qualify for overseas development assistance did

¹³¹ Interview with SEC 4

¹³² Interview with Hon. Peter Lokeris, Minister of State for Karamoja, Office of the Prime Minister, Kampala 4-12-03.

¹³³ Interview with 7.

¹³⁴ Interview with OTHER 1, REP 2.

¹³⁵ Interview with SEC 2.

¹³⁶ Interview with REP 2, OTHER 4.

¹³⁷ Interview with ADM 7.

not include military aspects of the weapons collection program, and certainly not the funding of non-state actors, who were mandated to provide security after disarmament.¹³⁸ In the end, the international donor involvement in the 2001-2002 disarmament program in Karamoja was limited; they contributed to the funding of the ox ploughs, iron sheets, beans and maize, but provided no major financial disbursements for the exercise.¹³⁹ The funding for the weapons collection activities came from the national budget.

The disarmament program was also troubled by internal problems. Corruption marred the disarmament program right from the beginning:

In September 2000, some Pian crossed over and raided an Internally Displaced Persons camp in Ngariam. They killed 17 people. The 3rd Division Command got fuel for disarmament, but it was shared and sifted off, even though the disarmament program was supposed to begin. Col. Geoffrey Taban Ruyendo and all of his commanders were relieved of their duties.¹⁴⁰

It is argued that corruption was also rife later on; it affected the implementation of the disarmament program. One Member of Parliament noted “The incentives never came. The budget for the program was 2 billion shillings, but no one knows where this money went because the effect was not felt on the ground. There was corruption in the Ministry of Defence and in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.”¹⁴¹ Another local Karamojong analyst argued “‘Participatory disarmament’ which uses paid vigilantes from the district to help disarm the warriors could work if ‘corrupt army officials’ did not embezzle the money, as had happened in the past”.¹⁴²

iii) Incentives

The response to disarmament incentives, and other efforts to mobilize the community, which were led by the local leaders and civil society organisations, was initially described as “excellent” by the

¹³⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, “Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientations for External Partners. Supplement to the DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century.” (Paris: OECD, 2001).

¹³⁹ Karamoja Data Centre, *Historical Time-line Showing the Genesis of Armed Cattle Raiding, Insecurity and the Establishment of Vigilantes* ([accessed 13 June 2003]); available from: http://www.karamojadata.org/history_guns_inkaramoja/htm.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with OTHER 1.

¹⁴¹ Interview with REP 2.

¹⁴² “Cattle raids: K’jong stick to their guns,” *The Monitor*, 27 March 2000.

government.¹⁴³ By January 2nd, 2002, the original deadline of the voluntary phase, 6452 weapons of an estimated 40,000 had been collected.¹⁴⁴ The deadline of Phase One was then extended to February 15th, 2002 as the response to the voluntary strategy had been so productive that the government had difficulty in delivering the promised incentives for the surrender of weapons. Several incentives had been promised to each person surrendering a weapon: a certificate for the weapon relinquished, a one kilo bag of maize meal, and an ox plough. For the local leaders who successfully mobilized their communities to comply, 20 iron sheets were also pledged.¹⁴⁵ These items were recommended as appropriate rewards by an earlier Parliamentary Task Force, after, it was claimed, adequate discussion with the communities. Few of the villagers I interviewed, however, felt that they had been consulted. Suggestions by CBOs for non-discriminatory, long-term communal incentives, such as cattle dips or boreholes, were ignored.

In general, people were disappointed with the exchange scheme for weapons. President Museveni said the Karamojong who surrendered their weapons would be "recorded as responsible citizens by being given priority in government's development programmes".¹⁴⁶ However in the planning of the incentives there was no serious provisions to link long-term socio-economic development with the disarmament program. Primarily, there were no attempts to provide alternative economic options for the primary users of weapons, the *ngikaracuna*. These youth warriors would have preferred incentives not linked to agriculture (primarily a woman's domain) which could lead to sustainable means of generating wealth, such as mining, brickmaking etc. Opinions regarding the rewards were mixed. Many found that the ox ploughs were not useful and came too late in the agricultural season, or could not be used because all of their cattle had been rustled. A majority of people interviewed felt the rewards did not suit their needs and they would have preferred cows or money to buy cattle, incentives linked to their traditional livelihood. Others found the items helpful when they were

¹⁴³ "Uganda: Focus on Karamoja Disarmament," *IRIN*, 10 January 2002.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Personal communication from the 3rd Division, UPDF.

¹⁴⁵ Interview NGO 2.

¹⁴⁶ "East Africa: Turkana leave Karamoja to avoid disarmament."

given them. However, not everyone who surrendered a gun got one of the incentives: in the end, the majority did not receive anything.¹⁴⁷ The government ran out of money to supply the maize meal and ox ploughs. And certainly, the methods of distribution of the rewards were not transparent; at the village level, many people suspected that corruption at the district level was preventing fair and equitable distribution. By the end of the original deadline of Phase One, the non-delivery of goods was affecting the motivation to voluntarily give in weapons, and the extended deadline of February 15th only yielded another 1224 guns.¹⁴⁸

b) A return to traditional methods

i) Phase II: Forceful disarmament

By the end of February 2002, the government's discourse on disarmament had changed quite dramatically from the earlier voluntary period. Major Shaban Bantariza, the government spokesman, told the UN news agency IRIN that "the army had decided to move in and forcibly disarm the Karamojong because they had largely ignored the call to surrender their guns under the voluntary disarmament programme launched by President Yoweri Museveni".¹⁴⁹ The Minister of State for Karamoja further warned "We have persuaded you (Karamojong) to return the guns for the last two months, and now we have washed our hands. It is time for the army to act – you know the consequences".¹⁵⁰ While the official disarmament strategy by this time had changed to one of force, civil society, both local and national NGOs and the Uganda Human Right Commission (UHRC), were continuing a strategy of engagement and dialogue with the army to try to minimize the risk of human rights violations. The UHRC suggested:

Where force is used it should not only be absolutely *necessary*, but *proportional* to the circumstances. The (Uganda Human Rights) Commission reasonably believes that there is a broad acceptance by the leadership and opinion leaders in Karamoja that the Karimojong

¹⁴⁷ Interview NGO 3.

¹⁴⁸ "Uganda: Army to begin forcible disarmament of Karamojong."

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

should be disarmed. This broad acceptance should be utilized to facilitate peaceful surrender of guns. It should be given priority and a chance before (the) resort to force is undertaken.¹⁵¹

The UPDF leadership was largely cooperative and open to attempting to deal with indiscipline within the lower ranks of soldiers who were implementing the second phase of the weapons collection program.

Nonetheless, during the subsequent months, serious concerns were raised by the media and civil society about the indiscriminate methods of disarmament used by the army despite human rights sensitization by the UHRC.¹⁵² The forceful disarmament operation involved the use of “police methods” whereby army personnel targeted specific areas in the sub-region. They then searched for hidden firearms and arrest those found in possession of them.¹⁵³ Other coercive methods were not officially sanctioned, but were used nonetheless:

Knowing they would abandon their weapons in order to keep their cows, the UPDF would count the number of Karamojong with guns then they would impound cattle. If the community produced the number of guns that the UDPF wanted, they would get their cows back, but this was always an exaggerated figure. By this time the UPDF knew that there was more than one gun per family.¹⁵⁴

During Phase Two, in Jie county where I conducted many of my group interviews, it was not uncommon for the men of a village to have been beaten, arrested and taken to the army barracks until weapons were surrendered.¹⁵⁵ And despite the fact that women, children and the elderly were not the primary users of weapons, they were not spared beatings either when the army came to search for firearms in the villages.¹⁵⁶ Many women reported being raped and assaulted during the military operations, including one pregnant woman who subsequently lost the baby, and another

¹⁵¹ Italics were added. Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Statement on the Government's Decision to Remove Illegal Arms from the Karamojong," (Kampala: UHRC, 2001).

¹⁵² "Karamoja remains volatile," *UN OCHA Humanitarian Update Uganda*, 4, no. 4/5 (2002).

¹⁵³ The illegal possession of arms carries a punishment of 7 years in jail. "Uganda: Army to begin forcible disarmament of Karamojong."

¹⁵⁴ Interview with OTHER 1.

¹⁵⁵ Interviews with CIV 6, CIV 7.

¹⁵⁶ Interviews with CIV 5, CIV 7, CIV 9.

who was beaten and later gave birth to a stillborn child.¹⁵⁷ One village testified that they had been displaced 20 miles after the army burned down their shop and huts. The villagers claimed to have stayed in the bush for two months, during which time many children died in the cross-fire of raids or from disease.¹⁵⁸

In other areas, such as Nakapiripirit district, the weapons collection program was conducted with significantly fewer incidences of human rights abuses, although, by May 2002 the disarmament exercise was yielding significantly less results in the entire region.¹⁵⁹ In part this slowness was due to the problems of the incentives and the inability of the government to ensure the basic security of the communities in Karamoja. While the army was attempting to recruit, train and deploy Local Defense Units (LDUs) comprised of armed local volunteers an unexpected complication occurred. On 15th March 2002, the UPDF launched a major offensive against the rebel Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda and the Sudan called "Operation Iron Fist", due to increasing LRA attacks in Ugandan territory. Two brigades of the UPDF stationed in Karamoja for the disarmament exercise, totalling some 10,000 men, plus helicopter gunships were redeployed to Northern Uganda.¹⁶⁰ Some of the LDUs recruited under the ASTU were also removed and redeployed to fight the LRA leaving the security gaps in Karamoja and Teso.¹⁶¹ This had the negative effect of severely reducing the military's presence and capacity in Karamoja to deal adequately with increasing incidences of internal and international cattle raiding.¹⁶² Local residents complained that the army was "too thin on the ground" to be able to deal effectively with the raiders.¹⁶³ As early as Spring 2002 local NGOs began to notice a significant increase in raiding activity, re-armament, and the

¹⁵⁷ Interviews with CIV 8, CIV 9.

¹⁵⁸ Interviews with CIV 6, CIV 7.

¹⁵⁹ By May 4th 2002, 9291 guns had been recovered in the three districts of Karamoja during the entire weapons collection program. Personal communication with a UPDF source.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with SEC 5.

¹⁶¹ Interview with SEC 8. Government of Uganda, "Defence and Internal Affairs Committee Report on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2002-2003," pg8.

¹⁶² Interview with NGO 6.

¹⁶³ Interview with REP 2.

return of the custom of carrying weapons publicly.¹⁶⁴ By this time, women felt that there was very little they could say to their menfolk about the re-armament and disarmament, as many women had been beaten as punishment for having advocated the surrender of weapons during Phase One.¹⁶⁵ Today, even the government acknowledges that the levels of small arms proliferation in Karamoja are higher than before the disarmament program.¹⁶⁶

ii) Storage and the non-destruction of weapons

One aspect of the 2001-2002 disarmament program in Karamoja that is not well-covered by existing literature is the collection, storage and non-destruction of the weapons. Also few of the interviewees could give reliable information about this aspect of the exercise. What is known is that a fraction of the weapons collected were redistributed in the second phase of disarmament and that none of the serviceable weapons from Karamoja were destroyed in later public ceremonies.

According to sources interviewed there was some confusion as to where the weapons were to be surrendered. One observer noted that the weapons were “handed into Local Council officials, the Church, the Police, Army units, Chief Accounting Officer, or anybody of authority. Even the headmaster of a high school was given a gun.”¹⁶⁷ The weapons collected were kept in the sub-counties, some were brought to the army headquarters in Moroto. Due to the imbalance of compliance amongst the clans, some communities were left more vulnerable than others. The government attempted to address the imbalance in the security situation by re-arming certain communities with the serviceable weapons collected.¹⁶⁸ Some of the firearms were redistributed to LDU recruits who had certificates showing they had disarmed. However these LDUs were given

¹⁶⁴ Interview with NGO7

¹⁶⁵ Interview with REP 7.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.* Personal communication with a UPDF source.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with OTHER 1

¹⁶⁸ Interview with SEC 1,

their guns before being properly trained.¹⁶⁹ Another source claims that 592 guns were given to the Pian community, not the LDUs.¹⁷⁰ One local NGO worker explained:

The communities that were re-armed included: Lorengdwat, Namalu, Nabilatuk and Lolachat sub-counties in Nakapiripirit district. These are all Pian areas. This didn't go over well with the other clans. The warriors who were re-armed refused to hand back their weapons. They began to raid their neighbours the Matheniko and the Bokora to take revenge. All of the other clans were pressuring their leaders to re-arm, but the government had already learned its lesson and it refused.¹⁷¹

By July-August 2002, all of the local clans had re-armed themselves with guns from Sudan and incidences of inter-clan raiding rose significantly.¹⁷² The program was severely discredited by the re-distribution of the arms collected to members of the Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs' own tribe. It highlighted the political nature of the disarmament initiative and the danger of aggravating the security situation after the intervention.

Other sources claim that the weapons that were not re-distributed were taken to the central Army armoury, because of the need for weapons to fight the rebel movements.¹⁷³ One NGO, Pax Christi led by Dr. Simon Simonse, had earlier presented a plan to the government regarding the disarmament program. Their plan included the provisions for the eventual destruction of the weapons collected. According to the Minister of State for Karamoja "He (Dr. Simonse) didn't have a convincing plan for disarmament. If you pay for a gun, then you must destroy them; but this matter wasn't considered serious. The government didn't seriously consider his plan."¹⁷⁴ The Uganda government claims that weapons seized during the Karamoja exercise were crushed in the public destruction ceremony of small arms in 2006.¹⁷⁵ However, according to the UNDP, which sponsored the destruction ceremony, the documented weapons originated from Mbarara, Masindi,

¹⁶⁹ Interview with NGO 7.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with REP 4.

¹⁷¹ Interview with NGO 3.

¹⁷² Interview with REP 6.

¹⁷³ Interview with NGO 8.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Hon. Peter Lokeris, Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, 4 Dec 2003.

¹⁷⁵ "Uganda: Extinguishing the fire of small arms," *IRIN*, 7 June 2006, "Uganda: Government, UN destroy 3,000 small arms," *IRIN*, 27 September 2006.

Magamaga, Jinja, Tororo, Mbuya, Entebbe and Nakasongola; none of the firearms destroyed were from the Moroto collection centre.¹⁷⁶

iii) Increasing conflict between the Karamojong and the state

The disarmament program, if it had been able to deliver all that was promised, might have improved civil-military relations. At the beginning of the voluntary phases there was a very good atmosphere of cooperation between the community-based organisations. Local residents were invigorated by Museveni's assurances stated in the Presidential circular. His promises for long-term development and the provision of security by the government raised expectations amongst the local communities. Interviewed by a journalist, Robert Locap, a local resident from Moroto said this was the only time that the community had ever trusted the government, but they were let down that many lost all of their wealth, and now they were very poor. It would take a lot of effort to convince them to disarm (again).¹⁷⁷ This was a very prevalent feeling which was expressed in many of my interviews. During the second phase of the program, when the incentives failed to materialize, re-armament occurred and the UPDF was powerless to prevent raids (both inter-clan and international), relations between the warriors and army worsened.

An illustration of this was the UPDF bombardment of Panyangara and Kakyere sub-counties in Kotido District in which the army bombed 25 homesteads, setting houses ablaze and destroying crops and graineries.¹⁷⁸ The incident occurred in mid-May 2002, after the army lost two soldiers in an operation attempting to forcibly disarm Jie warriors.¹⁷⁹ Around this time, the head of the 3rd Division of the UPDF the commanding officer in the area, published a circular on "The Dress Code for All Civilians in the Karamoja Region". It prevented the wearing of the traditional cloth, the *suka*, and any military attire by civilians. On May 13, 2002 the directive implemented in Moroto

¹⁷⁶ The only items destroyed to originate from Moroto included: grenades, anti-tank mines and cartridges. Interview with NGO 10.

¹⁷⁷ IRIN, "Guns Out of Control: the continuing threat of small arms," in *IRIN In-Depth* (IRIN, 2006), pg23.

¹⁷⁸ "Uganda: Disarmament exercise leads to clashes in Karamoja," *IRIN*, 21 May 2002.

¹⁷⁹ 13 Jie warriors were also killed. *Ibid.*

Town and the adjacent suburbs of Katanga and Achol-inn led to gross violations of human rights by the army. As the circular was not communicated in advance to people through their local leaders, many people were molested, beaten, stripped naked, sheets and beads were confiscated and money looted. The majority of those affected were women, especially the old and the young girls, who came into town from the surrounding vilages looking for casual labour, or selling charcoal and firewood to local residents.¹⁸⁰

The UPDF Political Commissar, DANIDA and the local government officials reacted quickly to resolve the situation, but the damage to public confidence was already done. As explain by one NGO source:

The suka incident made people lose trust and confidence in the government, specifically in the success of the disarmament exercise, because the military seems to have lost focus. Meanwhile there was increasing and intensifying cattle raids, between the Jie-Bokora and recently the Matheniko-Bokor, which the army failed to contain.¹⁸¹

By May 23, 2002, J.M. Omara, the then UHRC Commissioner of Monitoring and Treatise wrote:

...the disarmament program is currently out of course and not proceeding the way it was originally designed and agreed upon between the army, civil society organisations, NGOs and UHRC. Further, serious human rights issues have set in as the army tackles the question of disarmament. Fighting has erupted between Jie warriors and the UPDF leading to deaths, destruction of property, injuries, displacement and torture. As things stand no disarmament is taking place and those clans that had given up their guns are acquiring new ones for protection on the grounds that the army is incapable of providing the much-needed security for them.¹⁸²

The government continued to insist publicly that disarmament was on-going until the beginning of 2003.¹⁸³ However, the weapons collection program had effectively ended long beforehand.

¹⁸⁰ Interviews with NGO 3, OTHER 3.

¹⁸¹ Interview with NGO 3.

¹⁸² J.M. Aliro Omara, "Internal Memo - Re: Karamoja Disarmament," (Uganda Human Rights Commission, Monitoring and Treatises Department, 23 May 2002).

¹⁸³ Uganda People's Defence Force, "Briefing Report" (paper presented at the National Strategic Planning Workshop for Karamoja, Kampala, Uganda, 24 January 2003).

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The case of Karamoja exemplifies some surprising results about the utility and limitations of weapons collection programs not discussed in micro-disarmament literature. In this instance, the disarmament program as an independent activity did not automatically improve the security situation for various members of the society, nor for the community as a whole. In fact, the reduction of weapons in circulation proved to be reversible and the disarmament program actually worsened the precarious strategic balance between the clans. Surprisingly, the government itself did not have any defined criteria as to what would constitute a 'successful' program. One UPDF officer claimed "There was no criteria set. We were able to gauge the success of the program according to the response of the locals."¹⁸⁴ The response of the various communities and individuals was mixed.

One NGO worker explains why:

Pastoralists living in the border of Northeast Uganda, Southern Sudan and Northern Kenya have legitimate reasons to keep their guns as they are in charge of their own security. They see disarmament as an act of interference by the state and they are ready to do anything to defend their cause...In order for any community to surrender their guns the people need to be psychologically secure from both internal and external threats to their lives and property. They need to have trust and confidence in the substitute of the new security arrangements promised by the state. The pastoralists have their own confidence of keeping security not based on mere superiority of weapons but on the style of their informal approach (to security) as opposed to the formal approach used by the modern army.¹⁸⁵

A new security and development arrangement could have initially included negotiated arms control amongst the clans, coupled with the introduction of militias, and the sustained presence of the UPDF in border areas, followed by the development of alternative income generating activities for the users of weapons (primarily the *ngikarakuna*). Only after these elements were in place should long-term disarmament have been attempted. Furthermore, the emphasis of the program should have extended beyond the decommissioning of weapons to a more sustainable preventive approach to small arms by changing attitudes towards weapons possession and use.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with SEC 1.

¹⁸⁵ Romano Longole, "Disarming versus Taking Responsibility for Arms" (paper presented at the Conference on Controlling the demand for Small Arms: the search for Strategies in the Horn of Africa and in the Balkans, The Hague, Netherlands, 8-10 December 2003).

The Uganda Human Rights Commission in an internal report had highlighted some more critical criteria of how to judge the success of the initiative. Their performance indicators for the success of the disarmament program up until the end of the voluntary period were that:

- a) The gun culture had changed, fewer guns were being carried openly around or used with impunity, indicating increased awareness that firearms were illegal;
- b) The number of guns surrendered had consistently increased after the start of the sensitisation programme (this subsided when the sensitisation programme was halted in mid-Jan);
- c) There were noticeable reductions in the demand for ammunition;
- d) Local hospitals and clinics were reporting a significant decrease in the number of patients admitted for gunshot wounds;
- e) Increased public interest, and initiatives by local people to request sensitisation by the UHRC on the issue of disarmament;¹⁸⁶
- f) No serious human rights violations had been reported.¹⁸⁷

These were much more useful points from which to analyse the disarmament program, rather than the standard practice used by the government of counting the number of weapons collected, irrespective of their condition or the effect on the local communities. Unfortunately, the UHRC indicators were not integrated into the planning of the weapons collection program, and as a result the exercise lacked a conception of how to disarm the minds of the young men of Karamoja. The worsened socio-economic welfare of the Karamojong has reinforced the notion amongst the *ngikaracuna* that the only way to survive is to be armed. Obviously, this has deleterious effects on any attempt to develop alternative ideals of masculinity and related notion about modern pastoralism. At present, many Karamojong, especially the youth, refuse any discussion of a resumption of disarmament.

Like many other disarmament programs, during the conception of the Karamoja initiative, there was little serious attempt to address the material and security needs of the various stakeholders in a sustained manner, including the gun users and the more vulnerable sections of society, such as rural women and orphans. This suggests that practitioners must strive harder to situate micro-disarmament in a demand-side logic. The Ugandan policymakers and donors did not ask who was to

¹⁸⁶ Uganda Human Rights Commission, "Moroto Auxiliary Office Status Report on the Disarmament Program," pg7.

¹⁸⁷ "Status Report on Community Sensitisation," pg22.

be rendered more secure by the confiscation of the weapons. As a result, the micro-disarmament program in Karamoja was unable to address the emerging socio-economic order, which has emerged from the conflict situation, such as the widening economic gap between local residents, inter-generational breakdown, and the rise of warlord armies. The primary motive of the government to disarm the pastoralists was not to improve the human security conditions in Karamoja and neighbouring districts, but rather to avert an internal political crisis, by enacting a highly visible, short-term reactive activity.

In conclusion, the experience of micro-disarmament in Karamoja is highly relevant to how the international community should rethink small arms issues. It raises substantive questions about: who is the referent object to be secured by peacebuilding initiatives such as disarmament; what impact these programs have on civil-military, state-society and gender relations; and whether weapons collection programs actually contribute to an amelioration of the human security and peacebuilding efforts in the affected communities. The case of Karamoja suggests that there are still contradictions in donor funding priorities of security initiatives. No normative framework exists to guide the donors on questions about who should have the right to bear arms (i.e. non-state actors, community-based security systems) and under what conditions (i.e. when the state is unable to provide security to its citizens, arms control measures, etc.). This resulted in the hesitation on the part of donors to provide project funding for a program which involved non-state military forces.

Finally, state-centric security interventions such as micro-disarmament programs need to be harmonized with wider trends in overseas development policy. The international donors' supplementary aid to the Ugandan national budget was conditional on the provision that defense-related expenditures were cut (over a period of time) in favour of poverty reduction priorities. As a result in practise, the government of Uganda does not have the manpower or financial resources to protect its citizens simultaneously in both Northern Uganda and in the Karamoja region. They have chosen to prioritize the political threat of the LRA, to the detriment of resolving the social and economic violence in Karamoja and surrounding districts. Greater consideration of these

contradictions in funding and conception of small arms initiatives would go a long way towards improving their results, both for the local stakeholders and the state.

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7) Interviews by the author

A list of the interviews conducted by the author – that specifies the name and position of interviewees, and the place and date of the interview – is available only to the examiners on a confidential basis (see Appendix). The interviews are catalogued according to the organisation the interviewee worked for at the time of the interview. This coding system has been used throughout the thesis to illustrate to readers, who cannot see the list of interviews, the breadth of the fieldwork conducted as part of this thesis.

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Annex 1

Maps of Karamoja



KD

Karamoja Data Centre



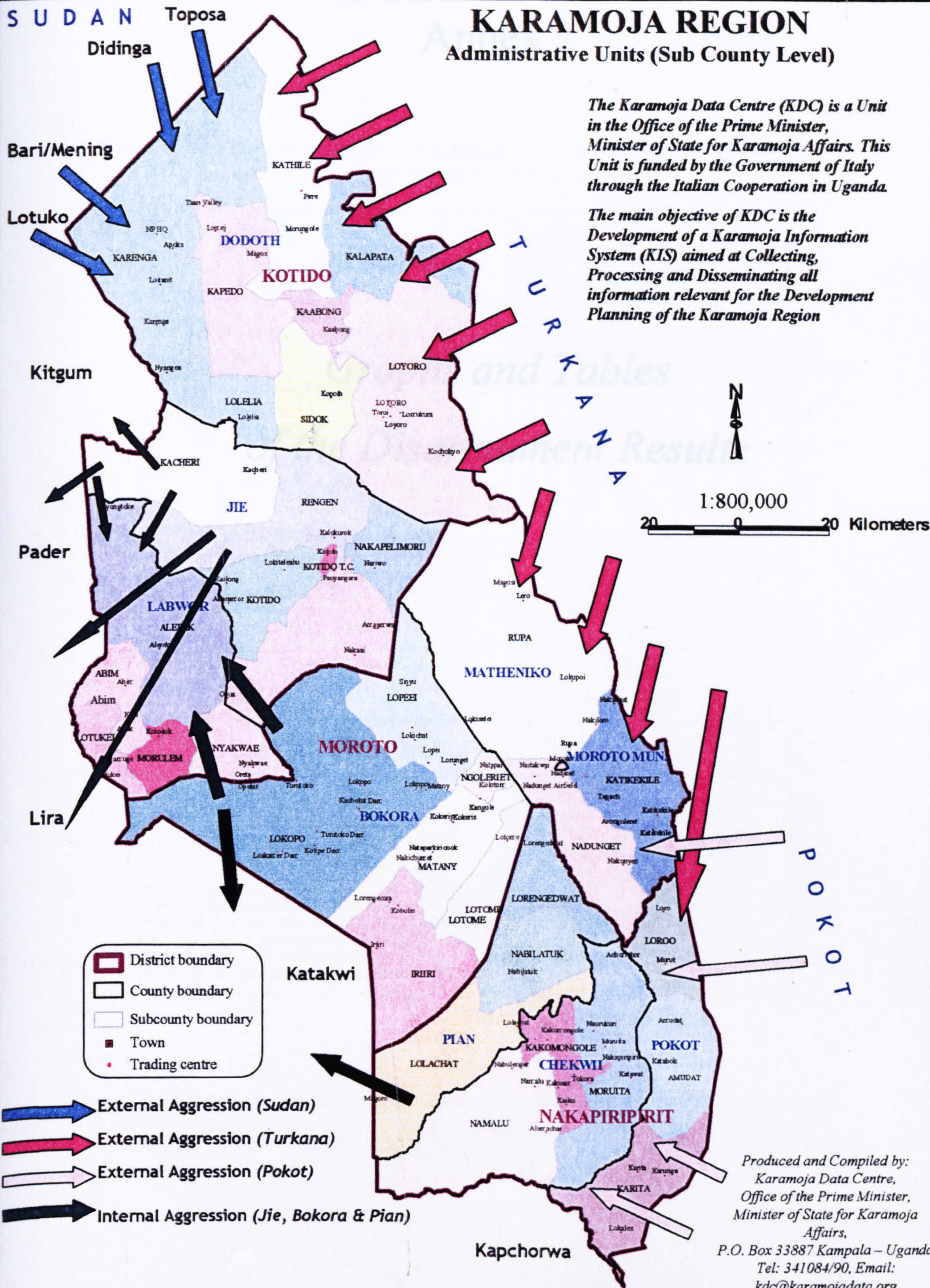
SUDAN Toposa

KARAMOJA REGION

Administrative Units (Sub County Level)

The Karamoja Data Centre (KDC) is a Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister, Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs. This Unit is funded by the Government of Italy through the Italian Cooperation in Uganda.

The main objective of KDC is the Development of a Karamoja Information System (KIS) aimed at Collecting, Processing and Disseminating all information relevant for the Development Planning of the Karamoja Region



- District boundary
- County boundary
- Subcounty boundary
- Town
- Trading centre

- External Aggression (Sudan)
- External Aggression (Turkana)
- External Aggression (Pokot)
- Internal Aggression (Jie, Bokora & Pian)

Produced and Compiled by:
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Annex 2

Graphs and Tables of the Disarmament Results

APPENDIX 2: Graphs and Tables of the Disarmament Results

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GUNS IN KARAMOJA PER COUNTY AND RECOVERY AS OF 25/4/2002

County	RM (15-50 yrs in 1991)	RM in 2000	RM Corrected	Total Pop.	% total pop	Estimated no. of guns	Guns recovered	Recovery %
BOKORA	5,316	6,805	12,039	81,180	15	4,013	1,782	44
MATHENIKO	9,698	12,414	18,144	105,517	17	6,048	756	13
DODOTH	18,201	23,299	33,783	176,071	19	11,261	2,275	20
JIE	10,594	13,561	17,630	95,184	19	5,877	1,601	27
LABWOR	10,817	13,847	17,308	76,120	23	5,769	408	7
CHEKWII	8,172	10,461	16,737	88,025	19	5,579	735	13
PIAN	4,383	5,611	8,135	55,352	15	2,712	1,001	37
POKOT	2,641	3,381	4,395	24,642	18	1,465	531	36
OVERAL PROGRESS	69,822	89,378	128,172	702,091	18	42,724	9,089	21

RM = Rural Males

Assumptions:

Moroto municipality is an urban area hence no guns

Gun wielding age group is 15-50 years of rural male population

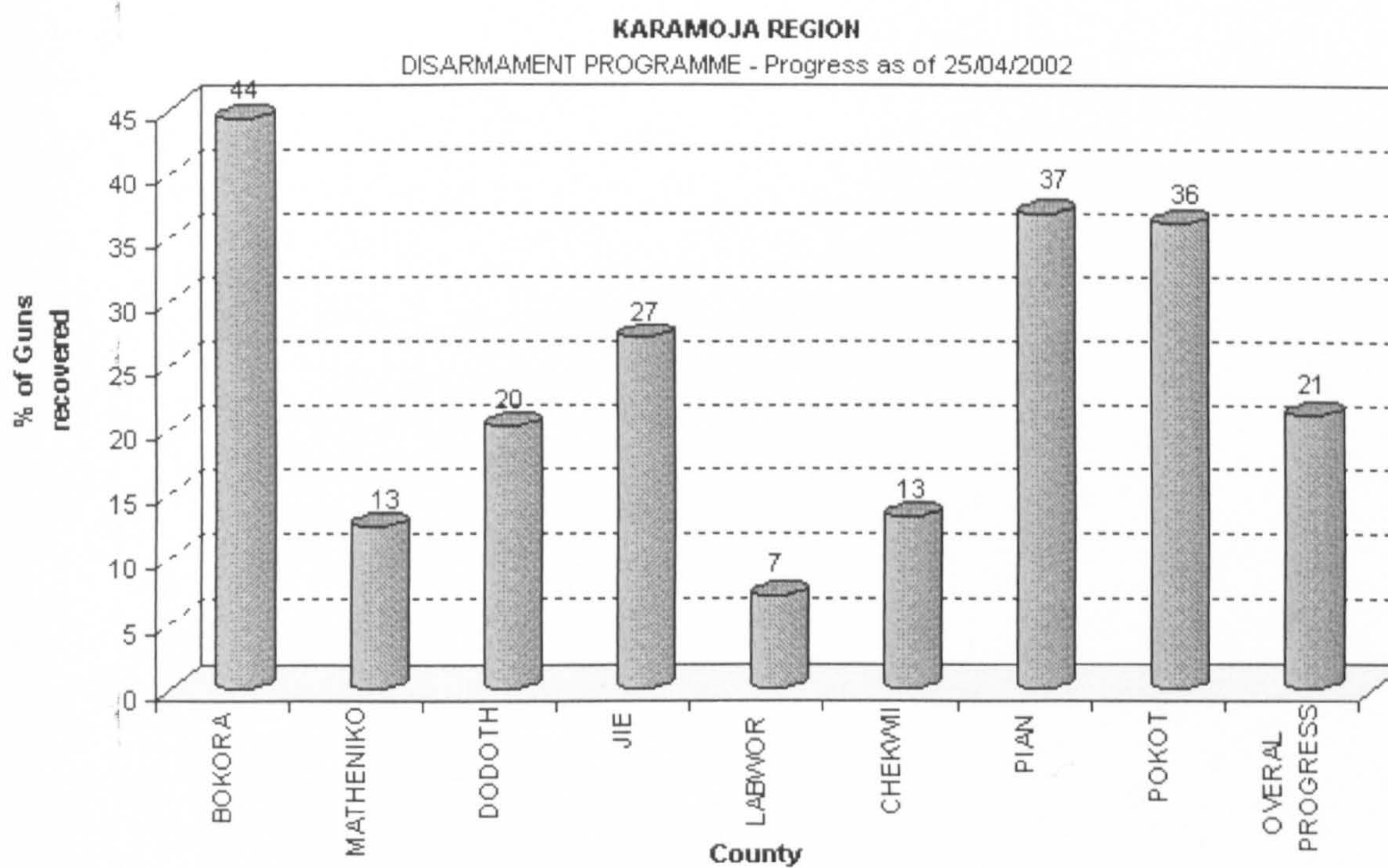
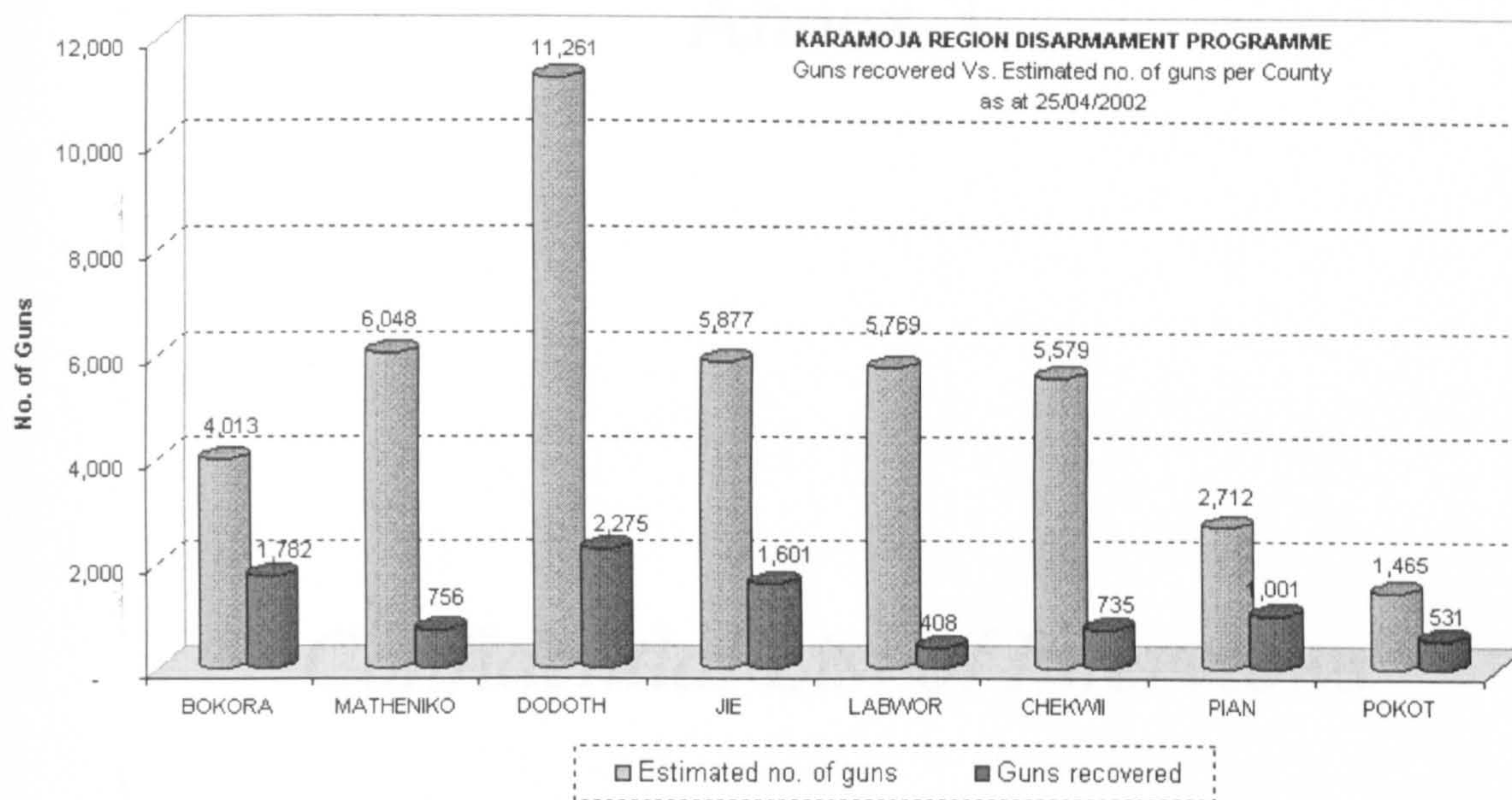
About 30% of the rural males aged between 15-50 years possess guns

Gun: Warrior to pastoralist ratio is 1:1

Data source: Population data obtained from the 1991 Population and Housing Census, Projected to 2000 and corrected for mobility factor

Source:

Karamoja Data Centre. *The Disarmament Process in Karamoja*, [website]. Karamoja Data Centre, 2003 [accessed 15 September 2004]. Available from: <http://www.karamojadata.org/disarmament.htm#Relaunching%20of%20the%20disarmament%20exercise>.



Source:

Karamoja Data Centre. *The Disarmament Process in Karamoja*, [website]. Karamoja Data Centre, 2003 [accessed 15 September 2004]. Available from: <http://www.karamojadata.org/disarmament.htm#Relaunching%20of%20the%20disarmament%20exercise>.

Annex 3

Confidential List of Interviews