

Often grouped indiscriminately with the Acholi in analyses of northern Uganda, the Langi maintain a sharp distinction in identity. They are bordered by the Acholi on the north, Iteso to the east and Bunyoro to the west while Lake Kioga forms the southern buffer separating Lango from Buganda and Busoga (see map).⁴ They generally conceptualize instability as emanating from these regions and beyond, rather than being attributed to Langi-specific dynamics. Their present preoccupations are the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which is widely perceived as being a strictly Acholi force (those Langi that are in the LRA are assumed to be there involuntarily) and livestock raiders originating from the east who are uniformly referred to as Karamojong, without reference to the distinct ethnic affiliation of the raiding group.

My research project was to conduct livelihoods analyses on low-ranking soldiers to gain insights on the forms and functions of militarized livelihoods systems as an exploration of the more mundane expressions of war economy. There is a remarkable dearth of research on the political economy of war in Uganda, in part because the conflict does not appear to be driven by the type of resources that are the focus of so much of the literature on war economy, e.g. oil, livestock, diamonds, coltan or other precious resources, and the forms of warlord structures such resource conflicts engender.⁵ This is not the only reason. Notwithstanding the efforts of some analysts,⁶ the dominant discourse by powerful state, humanitarian and human rights institutions about the conflict in northern Uganda has been remarkably effective in silencing nuanced explorations of the complex landscapes of violence or of the ranges of possible legitimacy of opposition. Conflict narratives instead are rooted in the language of barbarism⁷ with rebel leaders portrayed as senseless, dreadlocked, crazed individuals whom cannot be dealt with rationally. For example, the cartoon below depicts the State Minister for Defence Ruth Nankabirwa consulting a witchdoctor for charms to combat LRA leader Joseph Kony.⁸



⁴ "Ethnographic Uganda" (2001) African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/SKAR-64GDCA?OpenDocument&cc=uga&rc=1>, accessed February 15, 2007.

⁵ See, for example Reno, W. (1998). *Warlord Politics and the African States*. Boulder, Lynne Rienner. and Keen, D. (1994). *The Benefits of Famine: A political economy of famine and relief in southwestern Sudan 1983 - 1989*. Princeton, Princeton University Press..

⁶ See, for example Doom, R. and K. Vlassenroot (1999). "Kony's Message: A new Koine? The Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda." *African Affairs* 98(390): 5-36, Cline, L. E. (2003). "Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Based Violent Movements in Uganda." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 14(2): 113-130, Finnström, S. (2005). 'For God and My Life': War and cosmology in northern Uganda. *No Peace, No War: An anthropology of contemporary armed conflicts*. P. Richards. Oxford, James Currey: 98-116.

⁷ Hobsbawm, E. J. (1994). "Barbarism: A user's guide." *New Left Review* I(206).

⁸ Rastoon, The New Vision, 19th July, 2003.

Livelihoods is the study of how people negotiate within households and across societies to access and deploy assets in structured livelihoods strategies to realize their life objectives. Livelihoods analysis is grounded, explicitly or implicitly, in livelihoods frameworks, most commonly the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.⁹ While models influence the nature of inquiry, methodologies are determined by the types of populations and issues to be studied. The aim of the research is important as well because livelihoods research is often intended to empower impoverished populations. Studying livelihoods requires examination of the tangible and the intangible, using qualitative and quantitative skills.¹⁰ Research on (often ill-defined) households must be complemented by policy, institution and process research that draws on different methodological traditions.¹¹

This study on Ugandan soldiers was not a traditional application of livelihoods theory.¹² With its roots in Chambers' philosophies of development, livelihoods approaches aim to 'put poor people in the centre of development' and are concerned with 'empowerment' of impoverished populations, both in poverty's dimensions of material want and powerlessness. As in feminist research, livelihood analysts are encouraged to use methods that address the power differentials between researcher and researched. The development-oriented focus of the sustainable livelihoods agenda has embedded livelihoods analysis in the assumed mal-distribution of power between aid researchers and subjects populations. To reduce this differential, broad "ownership" of research is to be encouraged with "partners".¹³ The UK Department for International Development states that

Partnerships will be facilitated by a shared commitment to poverty reduction and should be based upon basic principles of equality, ownership, and participation. Partners should be fully involved in all stages of livelihoods analysis and subsequent planning.¹⁴

The pro-poor thrust of most livelihoods analysis posed methodological and ethical questions for my research and to a certain extent, I had to overcome the tyranny of the discipline of development studies to do this research. This was not a study on poverty but rather is an analysis of one type of livelihood group found in a conflict zone. The

⁹ Ashley, C. and D. Carney (1999). *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from Early Experience*. London, Department for International Development.

¹⁰ Goodhand, J. and D. Hulme (2000). "Social Capital and the Political Economy of Violence: A case study of Sri Lanka." *Disasters* 24(4): 390-406.

¹¹ Shankland, A. (2000). *Analysing Policy for Sustainable Livelihoods*. Brighton, Institute of Development Studies: 42.

¹² Why I chose to use livelihoods approaches is the subject of a different paper. In short, livelihoods theory has unexplored potential to be applied outside of its usual applications in sustainable development. This study was intended to explore how livelihoods research might shed new light on questions of militarization of societies, war economies and coping in complex political emergencies.

¹³ For example, a typical view is critiqued by Hendrie (1997: 58) who states that those who provide aid are "part of a global industry with resources, bureaucracies and information networks at their disposal" while aid recipients are "local, subsistence-based communities" Hendrie, B. (1997). *Knowledge and Power: A Critique of an International Relief Operation*. *Disasters: The journal of disaster studies and management*. 21: 57-76.

¹⁴ DFID. (2000). "Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, Sections 3 and 4." 2005, from www.livelihoods.org.

research was not intended to assist the soldiers to become mobilised around issues of poverty, as so much development studies in general and livelihoods research projects in particular are. While not contesting *a priori* evidence of welfare problems among the enlisted corps,¹⁵ the soldiers were employed, receiving both wages and benefits. In Uganda, poverty disproportionately affects women;¹⁶ the central focus of this study was men. Poverty is deepest in the war-affected northern region, and throughout the country rural households in Uganda are poorer than urban households.¹⁷ Although the study population claimed at least one household mostly rural Lango, the soldiers were working in a main town, either Lira or Jinja.

While the material dimensions of poverty were not overarching, power was. The research context was characterised by powerful institutions, including the UPDF, militias, security officers, international and local development organizations, formal and informal religious and spiritual institutions, government representatives, an unpredictable rebel force and other lawless elements. The research areas in Lango were enclaves of vulnerability and intense uncertainty, subject to the forces of impoverishment and powerlessness engendered by thirty years of instability, recent waves of violent attacks, a legacy of underdevelopment and organised encampment. The atmosphere was charged with the threat of failure of the peace talks, after which most Langi expected an upsurge in reprisal attacks by the LRA, as had been the case in the past.¹⁸ This is not to imply that there were clear popular delineations of support for either the army or the rebels. There are ambiguous relationships between households and armed elements, including both the LRA and the UPDF.¹⁹ With a focus on military families, I expected blurred distinctions between civilians and combatants, and varied sources of violence against the household (rebel, governmental, criminal) but I found a much broader range of aggression, extending to families, neighbours, clans and spirits.

A key challenge for the research was to gain access to the UPDF and to be granted permission to consider only Langi soldiers. Given the history of ethnic strife in various Ugandan armies, the UPDF does not collect information about soldiers' ethnic (or religious) affiliation. From a sampling point of view, no sampling frame existed from which a random sample of Langi soldiers could be drawn, precluding even the theoretical

¹⁵ See, for example, Nyakairu, F. (2005). Army wants Shs10b for loans to soldiers. *The Monitor*. Kampala..

¹⁶ Munene, J. C., S. H. Schwartz, et al. (2005). *Escaping from Behavioural Poverty in Uganda*. Kampala, Fountain.

¹⁷ Appleton, J. (2003). Regional or National Poverty Lines? The Case of Uganda in the 1990s. Helsinki, UN-WIDER Discussion Paper 2003/90: 24.

¹⁸ For a good description of escalation of violence following failed peace talks, see Dolan, C. (2000). Views on the Northern Uganda conflict from inside the war zone: Report on COPE fieldwork findings, Northern Uganda. London, ACORD: 22.

¹⁹ Lomo et al found that "much has been said about the alleged abuses committed by the UPDF and its inability to effectively protect the civilian population. However... civilians have a more subtle understanding of the situation: while the UPDF as a whole is equated with the government, there is a clear understanding of the difference between the foot soldiers whose job it is to confront the LRA on a daily basis, and those in higher-ranking positions. Thus informants, while condemning abuses by the UPDF and expressing genuine fear in some instances, also showed an awareness of their predicament." (Lomo, Z. and L. Hovil (2004). Behind the Violence: Causes, consequences and the search for solutions to the war in northern Uganda. Kampala, Refugee Law Project: 55)

possibility of drawing a statistically significant sample. Bearing in mind the history of violence against the Langi at the Jinja Barracks, my request to interview members of only this one ethnic group drew sharp reactions at all levels.²⁰ One intelligence officer asked “Why this tribalism?” Soldiers would raise similar questions in the interviews: *Are you being directed to go to the Lango sub-region or was that your choice? (SB)*

You see, at the beginning, I was not understanding the, what? (The) program. So my question is, you know in the army. The army is, OK, it is what, full of, what, OK, let me say contradiction, so there's no likely OK, OK, OK, implication of this thing, after some times, maybe a bad one, to us?... Because my worries was, you see, in Uganda, people may change things to be political, in future. Because as per now, people are asking why, what, why only the Lango sub-region? Why not other regions? So, even if you explain to them, there are some people that can understand but others can't completely (SQ).

So how did I gain access? As so often happens, it was mostly related to a chance encounter. I knew a US army officer from my unrelated work for the US and Ethiopian Governments who had served as the US Military Attaché in Uganda. Despite not knowing me well, he alerted his former colleagues in the UPDF about the research project. The researcher was thus presented to the UPDF if not as a military insider, then at least as a responsible analyst who was generally not anti-government. This fortuitous introduction resulted in endorsement of the research on only one ethnic group by the highest levels of the UPDF. Maj. Gen. Ivan Koreta²¹ wrote a letter of introduction on UPDF letterhead that I carried with me throughout the research. He also appointed the Military HQ (Bombo) head of personnel, a Langi major, to serve as my sponsor. Both men, but especially Koreta, took a keen interest in the study and retained an air of friendly informality throughout.

The letter from Koreta was both asset and liability. Had I ever been caught by the LRA with the letter in my possession it would have been a death sentence, but it opened the doors to army, militia, security and other governmental institutions throughout northern Uganda. I used it sparingly because it could be an instrument of intimidation and relied

²⁰ Another research team was planning a study of civilian livelihoods in Lango. I intended to collaborate with them in order to compare aspects of civilian and military livelihoods systems. After I initiated the study, the other team shifted its focus to other areas. There were other reasons to focus on the Langi. The available literature on almost every aspect of LRA-affected areas of northern Uganda was biased towards research and humanitarian agency reports from Acholiland, with little focus on Lango. The region had a reasonable degree of security. Under former president Milton Obote, the Langi enjoyed ascendancy in the armed forces, especially during Obote's second presidency. In addition to colonial recruitment policies that drew heavily (but not exclusively, see Thompson, G. (2003). Governing Uganda: British colonial rule and its legacy. Kampala, Fountain Publishers) from the north, this suggested a continued post-Independence historical trend of militarised livelihoods in the region.

²¹ Ivan Koreta began his career as a soldier with Yoweri Museveni in the Front for National Salvation in the late 1970s. He commanded the 13th Battalion during the capture of Kampala in 1986. He has been Director General of the Internal Security Organisation, served as UPDF 1st Division Commander, and led Uganda's UN peace keeping contingent to Liberia. Following his tenure as commandant of the Command and Staff College, he was appointed as Chief of the Defence Forces in 2005. He is currently serving as Chair of the UDF General Court Martial Kato, J. (2005) "What the Army Reshuffle Means." The New Vision (Online Edition) Volume, DOI: .

instead on my government permit when introducing myself to local officials. The letter from such a high ranking military officer immediately cast suspicion on the research and me. Further, some soldiers hid their occupations from their neighbours, explaining their absence by saying “I’m a teacher in Jinja.” These soldiers were concerned that I should not accidentally reveal their true identities. In such cases, I explained to local officials that I was conducting livelihoods research on migrants.

Research and researcher under these conditions could not be neutral, but care was taken in order to be independent from powerful institutions. I wanted to distance myself from any NGO or UN identity to minimize expectations that my visit would bring aid to the community and also to lessen related bias of conditioned responses. No NGOs and only the Red Cross worked in the barracks. In Lango, in contrast to the agencies, rather than employ a driver, I drove (slowly) an old (1996), non-white, small all-wheel drive vehicle. The research assistants and I lived in tents either within or as close as possible to the homesteads. I focused on one family at a time in discrete locations rather than on whole, geographically contiguous communities. With the exception of one NGO in one camp, I did not encounter other foreigners living or working in any of the research areas outside of Lira town. I did not seek any external funding for the research but rather paid for it myself; this made a difference. A surprising number of families and soldiers asked who was paying for my research.²²

My position as an outside researcher moved between vulnerability and power. I was concerned about power dynamics at the interpersonal level between the soldiers, most of whom were male, and me. Huggins and Glebbeek’s (2003) work on women researching violent male-dominated institutions in Latin America suggests that strategies are necessary for the effectiveness of studies and safety of researchers. They focused on women conducting research on human rights abuses (e.g. state-sanctioned torture and murder). They encountered problems of gaining both access and confidence as well as reconciling the diametrically opposed viewpoints that unfolded in the course of repeated interviews (e.g. when comparing the accounts of human rights activists and implicated security personnel). They analyse the different experiences of Huggins, an older researcher with long experience in country and Glebbeek, a young, attractive and inexperienced Ph.D. student. Each researcher faced different challenges and opportunities that they attributed to gender and generational dynamics.

Huggins’ older age, personal contacts in the security forces and deep contextual knowledge worked in her favour. By contrast, Glebbeek struggled to balance opportunities for research (e.g., meeting men at night) with issues of personal safety. Each researcher employed strategies that were effective for gaining the trust of the research subjects, but not without having to repeatedly examine the power relations between themselves and the subjects as well as the ethical and methodological implications of being a vulnerable researcher. They conclude that gender dynamics worked to open some avenues of inquiry while silencing others. As in my case, neither approached the research from a participatory or empowering perspective; rather, they

²² This was made possible in large part by a Fulbright grant and an ORISHA scholarship that covered my tuition fees at Oxford.

justified using a form of objectifying the research subjects whereby they exploited any form of power they might have over their subjects, power that ranged from knowledge and age to projected innocence and ‘feminine guile’.

I approached the research as a disadvantaged outsider, especially when dealing with the UPDF. I am female, middle-aged, white and lacking any experience in armed forces. My identity and background combined to suggest a reversal of the assumed power dynamics of livelihoods research, i.e., of a vulnerable researcher and a dominant subject population. In line with Huggin’s experience, my position was ameliorated by my current and past affiliations with academic research institutions, my age, the relative simplicity of my research topic and its congruence with institutional interests; the Ministry of Defence has expressed concerns about the welfare of soldiers. I decided to focus on enlisted personnel from the north, thus eliminating suspicions that I was investigating sensitive issues that affect the officer corps.

However, I found it very difficult to maintain Huggins and Glebbeek’s approach of exploiting every opportunity to exercise power over the research subjects. The cohort of Langi privates was characterized by their own highly dynamic juxtapositions of power and vulnerability. The lowest ranks of the enlisted forces, by definition and norm, are in constant positions of subordination in their professional lives. It was not uncommon to see scantily dressed soldiers at the barracks carrying oversized tractor tires around their necks, with a drill sergeant barking incessantly to keep marching. In their home communities, soldiers are suspected of thieving, stealing women, abandoning their families, drunkenness, and rape and other forms of violence, putting them in positions of power and powerlessness. Nine soldiers in cohort were disabled and dealt other power dynamics, having been relieved of combat duties for many years, in some cases up to a decade. The younger soldiers nearly uniformly regretted their decision to join the army.

The combination of power and vulnerability led to internal identity confusion for me. I have a humanitarian career that spans two decades. Many of the soldiers were affiliated with families marked by extreme vulnerability of tragic dimension, stirring responses of compassion rather than manipulation. It was not always very easy to tell where the violent institution ended and where the tragedy of poverty began. When did one justify exploitation and when was not exploitation not only unjustified, but also morally abhorrent? While I struggled with internal confusion, external identity confusion was useful for keeping the research assistants and me safe in the field and for opening the doors to institutions that might not otherwise have met with me. I am fairly androgynous with short, grey hair and a tendency to dress in jeans and polo shirts in the field. People would ask the research assistants if I was a man or a woman, and some mistook me for a priest when I drove along the largely empty roads of Lango.²³ Others assumed I was part of the humanitarian community. Those who knew the nature of my research could not be sure that I was not part of an army, either Ugandan or foreign. With the addition of a wedding ring, I encountered a minimum of sexual tension of the type experienced by Glebbeek and enjoyed a degree of personal security throughout the research, despite

²³As I drove, children would shout (in Luo) “Paddy, give me sweets!” and adults would call out “Paddy, I greeted you!” Rather unnervingly, some women genuflected and crossed themselves.

having no more than millimeters of tent material to separate me from the potential hostilities of the conflict-affected areas.²⁴

Informed Consent and Soldier Interviews

Given a military culture of subordination to hierarchy and unquestioned obligation to follow orders, gaining informed consent for research on the soldiers presented unique challenges. My introduction at the barracks was facilitated by the unscheduled arrival of a major general and this surprised the staff and soldiers in training; the ranking officer at the barracks at the time was a major. This set the tone for my work but also raised issues of the degree of informed consent the soldiers could exercise once identified for possible inclusion in the study.²⁵ I stressed that participation was voluntary and offered no inducements for participation.²⁶ I explained that I had no links with assistance groups, a point reiterated in every interview.

Implicit consent was assumed if soldiers showed up for their interview appointments. By not showing up for appointments, I assumed consent was withdrawn. Soldiers had another opportunity for opting out of the study by not providing maps to their households, an option taken by six Jinja-based soldiers. In Lira, all soldiers completed maps but two provided maps that were grossly inaccurate. I spent five days trying to locate the families of one soldier and finally dropped him from the study. The second soldier was an Acholi, according to residents of an internally displaced persons camp to where I had been directed by the soldier, ostensibly to find his parents. This soldier had gone to the extent of conspiring with the camp leader to produce a Langi family that could pose as the Acholi soldier's own. Fortunately, others in the camp informed the research team of the actual parent's whereabouts (in Acholi) before the mock family was interviewed. The soldier could not tell me he was an Acholi because his commanding officer had incorrectly assumed he was a Langi and had ordered him to muster other Langi. The soldier was not able to correct his commanding officer; further, he was the most senior of all the soldiers mustered in Lira so his fellow soldiers felt unable to clarify the situation for me as well. This example underscores some of the limits of informed consent in research on low-ranking soldiers.

While I understood why some soldiers did not provide me with maps, by the end of the field research I struggled to reconcile why others did, knowing what I would find once I got there. The networks of affiliation between soldiers and households were at times characterised by deception and neglect, not only by soldiers but also by household members towards soldiers. In several cases, there were yawning gaps between the responses of the soldiers and of households to identical questions. Alcoholism and abuse were serious issues in some homes. Several soldiers altered their identities to join the

²⁴ The female research assistant, on the other hand, had to deal with unwelcome sexual advances. She was quite capable of handling this on her own but our co-habitation in the same tent was useful for her protection

²⁵ For a discussion of informed consent for vaccination in the UK armed forces, see Murphy, D., C. Dandeker, et al. (2006). "UK Armed Forces Responses to an Informed Consent Policy for Anthrax Vaccination: A paradoxical effect?" *Vaccine* 24: 3109-3114..

²⁶ Although the families of soldiers were paid.

UPDF, sometimes to mask dark pasts, others to prepare for future crimes (most commonly desertion). A few soldiers expressed fear about how I would use the results.²⁷

I have talked of some problems,. Me personally, I didn't want to tell anyone because I didn't want anyone to know I had such problems at home. But now that as I have told you, I don't know what you are thinking about it. (SK)

There were several possibilities why the soldiers directed me to these homesteads, including a military mindset that precludes disobedience. Some soldiers did not believe that I would travel to distant, insecure and remote areas. My judgments about dysfunctional families were no doubt different from the soldiers'; what was disconcerting to me may well have been normal to them. Despite my statements to the contrary, soldiers held out hope that I would be of some assistance to themselves or their families.

Maybe if anything happen, like maybe tomorrow I died, then in future, if any help comes from these questions you have been asking, maybe from the NGOs, to whom are they going to give – to my family or maybe to my father's home? I just wanted to know. In case any assistance might go to the government or go to the family? (SAA)

All these may have been factors, but the strongest possible explanation derives from the nature of the networks of affiliation that connect soldiers and households in Lango. Soldiers generally are given only one home leave pass per year. Communication is expensive, erratic and brief, usually limited to dealing with financial transactions or family emergencies. Some soldiers had not been home since joining the UPDF. Soldiers and families alike capitalise on opportunities for communication along the fragmented lines that characterised these militarised livelihoods systems. Rather than being seen as an objective, neutral researcher, I was exploited as one such opportunity; metaphorically speaking, I brought news to the front.

Since opting out proved an important pathway of informed consent by the soldiers, I assumed that households would use the same mechanism. The research assistants told me that it was against Langi culture to refuse strangers, especially those that have a connection to a family member. I asked each household for permission not only to conduct the interviews but also to camp as close to their main house as possible. I tried to provide families with every opportunity and reason to send me away (including not mentioning that I would be paying a modest fee at the conclusion of our stay), but not a single household did so. In addition, although I explained that the household should feel free to refuse to answer any survey question, no individual refused any part of the questionnaire. I never satisfactorily resolved the problem of informed consent for the households, and hence remained concerned about the degree of agency each household could exercise in determining their participation in the study. In a few cases, I ended the

²⁷ The entire survey population is protected by anonymity. All soldiers were assigned a number and each household affiliated with the soldier was recorded by soldier number. Because soldiers could figure out my numbering system, these numbers have been changed here to letter combinations. Care has been taken to ensure that no village or IDP camp can be identified from the information presented.

interview after one day because I sensed that our questions were inappropriate or unwelcome, but this was never expressed by interviewees.

My practical response to this dilemma was to ensure that the research assistants and I were fully self-sufficient, carrying tents, bedding, fuel, food and all other basic necessities. Where available, we shared household sanitation facilities and collected our own water. If people approached us for work, we hired people to wash our clothes or clean the car; otherwise, we did all work ourselves. I refused all gifts (usually chickens or vegetables) which, as per Langi custom, were routinely offered.²⁸

Conclusion: Data analysis and interpretation

Research does not end with the return from field work, and neither do issues of power. Issues of data analysis²⁹ conclude this paper because a meaningful discussion of interpretation can only follow when the context of data collection is understood. The processes of information gathering were not straightforward exchanges of facts. Rather, information was revealed or concealed to serve complex, largely unspoken, purposes. Triangulation is intended to overcome these problems. In this study, great effort was invested in triangulation, not only within survey instruments but more importantly, across space. In all but a few cases, I was able to locate the soldiers' households and ask them the same questions I had asked the soldiers. Given communication problems, families often not only did not expect my visit they did know what I had asked the soldiers. But rather than verify answers, triangulation mostly served to lay bare stark differences in facts as presented by soldiers and households, disparities that could not be explained by the few months' time difference between administering the surveys to the soldiers and their families.

Differences between soldiers' and households' answers should not be interrogated to determine which is true and which is false. Rather, differences have to be considered for their meanings (or possibly attributed to translator or enumerator error). When soldiers appeared to exaggerate the frequency and value of remittances, this reflected at times their aspirations of the person they would like to be, at others of an unwillingness to admit to having abandoned family to meet other priorities, and at others a simple response to my (unhelpful) habit of responding positively to those who cared for others ("Oh, aren't you a good guy?") Mostly, differences reflect the fragmented nature of linkages and relationships across spatially dispersed households. Rather than say (especially repeatedly) "I don't know," it perhaps seemed better to say something else.

²⁸ This was often awkward as families were easily offended by my refusal. I resorted to saying that it was against the rules of the university to accept gifts from study participants. This worked in all but one case.

²⁹ The UPDF cohort survey data was entered using Excel while the household data was entered using EpiData. All of the data was analysed using SPSS. Household livelihoods maps were digitized into PowerPoint and homestead sketches were scanned as digital files. All notes were typed into Word. Quantitative analysis of the data was limited because the sample was not statistically representative, but correlations and regressions are currently being explored to identify key relationships among variables. Descriptive statistics were important for allowing comparison and generalization about key trends within livelihoods systems.

This is not to imply that the soldiers were less forthcoming than the households. My contact with most soldiers was relatively brief, lasting from one to three hours, while we spent days living in close proximity, talking to and observing families. We saw who ate and slept where, watched men, women, children and the aged negotiate often fraught familial relationships, and counted livestock as they were tied up late at night. Households could never be sure that I was not associated with an aid agency or the government, in which case concealment of income and assets and exaggeration of losses would be important livelihoods strategies. The entire research population has been affected, to lesser but often to very serious degrees, by various forms of violence over three decades. During this time, it often had proved fatal to reveal connections to any armed force, to be in a position of wealth or status, or to do anything that might look suspicious. Despite the peace talks in Juba, most households visited were living in what Linda Green (2002) aptly terms "a state of fear". These anxieties could not be divorced from the one powerful institution from which I could not distance myself adequately: the UPDF. Combined, these forces conditioned responses to my questions, and must be taken into account when interpreting the seemingly neutral collection of data that now resides in the SPSS files on my computer.

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