



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
School of Global Studies

Dismantling a ticking time bomb:
Horizontal Inequalities in Peacebuilding

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Abstract

Understanding processes of peacebuilding, how peace is created and maintained, has inspired and intrigued an entire field of academics and practitioners. This thesis is an attempt to understand the role of horizontal inequalities (HIs) in the peacebuilding process of Uganda from the perspective of civil society. It explores their role in shaping the Ugandan society, as well as how they could potentially affect efforts towards sustaining long-term peace. The research is built on the premise that peacebuilding has traditionally been concerned with correcting and addressing vertical inequalities between individuals, while inequalities between groups have been neglected. The purpose of this research is, therefore, to expand the notion of peacebuilding and inequalities to recognise group inequalities as a potential threat to sustainable peace. The study found that civil society is aware of HIs in Uganda and the need for addressing them. However, initiatives to solve the deep-rooted structures upon which they are founded are limited. The results show that civil society works predominately intra-communally, while the hostile tribal dynamics creating HIs are found across communal boundaries. It was also found that the top-level leadership holds significant influence over the peacebuilding process, particularly in societies characterised by severe political HIs as this gives them power over resource allocation which impacts socioeconomic HIs. Finally, it was recognised that there is a severe lack of both data and approaches aimed at addressing issues of HIs in peacebuilding, particularly approaches not intended for top-level initiatives, leaving civil society with limited tools or capacity to address such largescale complexities.

Key words: Horizontal inequalities, Civil Society, Peacebuilding, Uganda, Acholiland

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Abbreviations

CT	Conflict Transformation
GBV	Gender Based Violence

HI	Horizontal Inequalities
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
VI	Vertical Inequalities

Introduction & Problem Formulation

This study seeks to understand the role of horizontal inequalities (HIs) in peacebuilding processes according to civil society. In the context of Uganda, the interest thus, lies in exploring how civil society understands how HIs shape the society, and most importantly, their role in the peace process. Furthermore, it explores potential complexities for addressing such inequalities by looking at the relational structures and actors in the peacebuilding process.

In the literature on peace and conflict, there is a growing consensus that HIs, defined by Stewart (2000: 245) as: “inequalities among groups in political, economic and social dimensions”, are a source for animosity between groups, which increases the likelihood of violent conflict (Stewart 2000; Stewart, Brown, and Mancini 2005; Hillesund 2017; Brown and Langer 2010; McCoy 2008; Fjelde and Østby 2014; Cederman, Weidmann, and Bormann 2015). Additionally, Brown and Langer (2010: 28), claim that ‘ethnic’ conflicts, i.e. conflicts between different ethnic groups, quadrupled in its proportions out of all conflicts between the mid-20th century and 2005. Based on such information, it is fair to assume that HIs have played a significant role in creating hostility resulting in armed conflict in recent decades.

HIs take the shape of political, economic and social differences between groups and are tainted by discrimination of the disadvantaged group, which results in inequality. Political HIs are found in the representation and access to decision-making processes, as well as in security forces such as the military or the police (Brown and Langer 2010: 29). Economic HIs include (1) ownership over assets, such as, natural resources and land, and (2) accessibility to employment and income (Ibid.). The social dimension concerns the inequality in general wellbeing and quality of life. This refers to access and outcomes to many services, such as education, healthcare and housing (Ibid.). Allowing the continued existence of such inequalities can result in major grievances and even human rights abuses, as the affected population may have their rights denied as a result of a lack of access to education, healthcare and so on.

Previous research has predominately focused on the escalating and causal role of HIs on violent conflict (Hillesund 2019; Langer, Mustapha, and Stewart 2009; Brown and Langer 2010; Stewart 2010; Langer 2005; Stewart 2007; McCoy 2008; Langer and Stewart 2015; Fjelde and Østby 2014). In contrast, this research is interested in understanding what role HIs may take in building peace. This entails exploring if and how civil society are concerned with HIs in their peace efforts, the potential effect HIs have on shaping the society, and how they have been created and perpetuated.

HIs and peacebuilding will be studied in the context of Uganda; a country with a history of reoccurring conflict and instability deeply perpetuated by HIs, and even a decade after the civil war ended, the country is still struggling with grave group inequalities. While the country has seen many insurgencies since its independence in 1962, the focus of this thesis is limited to the current peacebuilding process following the end of the LRA war, short for Lord's Resistance Army, and is also referred to as the Northern Conflict – both terms will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. Uganda has been chosen as the case study due to a clear history of HIs based on tribal and regional imbalances impacting the conflict and the post-conflict period. Furthermore, as approximately 10 years have passed since the conflict ended, Uganda is firmly placed in the peacebuilding stage. This allows both for an analysis and understanding of the peacebuilding process thus far and an exploration of a potential way forward.

Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this paper is to understand the role of HIs in the peacebuilding process of Uganda. The purpose is to explore how HIs affect the peacebuilding process from the perspective of civil society, or more specifically, international and local non-governmental organisations. The study does not undermine nor question the importance of traditional approaches to peacebuilding – such as statebuilding and economic development – but rather, seeks broaden the discussion to one with a greater emphasis on addressing HIs and their potential role in the peacebuilding process.

Research Questions

In order to further delimit the purpose of this study, the following overarching question is asked:

What role do horizontal inequalities play in the peacebuilding effort of civil society?

This is further delimited by asking:

- **How does civil society view horizontal inequalities' role in shaping the society and the vision for peace in the context of Uganda?**

Here I will explore how horizontal inequalities, according to civil society, have affected the Ugandan society, as well as the view on their place in the envisioned peace moving forward. This with the intention to establish the relevance of addressing such issues in the peacebuilding process.

- **How does civil society perceive salient group divisions and how they play out in the Ugandan context?**

Through the perspective of civil society, this will be answered by looking at the relational structures of Uganda, and how such structures create and reinforce group belongings, which manifests themselves as horizontal inequalities.

- **What impact do peacebuilding actors have on the peacebuilding process and horizontal inequalities in Uganda?**

Here I intend to examine how various peacebuilding actors influence the peacebuilding process in terms of reducing or reinforcing horizontal inequalities and facilitating or obstructing the peace efforts.

Relevance to Global Studies

Never before has our world been more interconnected than it is today. Society, culture, technology, the economy, the environment, and politics are all influencing and being influenced by globalisation. The field of peace and conflict is no exception. While violent conflicts today may not be compared to or labelled as ‘world wars’, the rest of the world plays a more active role in them than ever. The international community has a hand in every single conflict and in the ensuing peace. This is not only true for inter-state conflicts, but also for those defined as intra-state conflicts. Whether it be international actors selling the weapons (del Rio and Maman 2018), having an active role in the fighting (‘Syria’ n.d.), acting as mediators during the conflict resolution (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2016: 217), or taking part of the peacebuilding process as actors or donors (Lilja and Höglund 2018) the international community has a role in the peacebuilding process. Furthermore, intrastate conflicts can also impact and contribute to instability and insecurity on a regional level. Uganda is no exception to this, particularly as it is located in a heavily conflict-stricken region. Several neighbouring countries also engaging in violent conflict have seen an over-spill of the Ugandan conflict, and equally, Uganda has seen an influx of refugees as a result of such intrastate conflicts. As such, with an understanding of the global dimension of peace processes, this research is of utmost relevance to the field of Global Studies.

Methodology

The research, seeking to understand the role of HIs in the peacebuilding process from the perspective of civil society in Uganda, was based on eleven (11) qualitative semi-structured interviews with a variety of organisations, all located in Uganda and involved in the peace process. The 11 organisations can be divided into two subcategories, five local grassroots non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and six international non-governmental organisations (INGOs).

The foundation of this study was built on a literature review. One which started the research process and continued throughout the collection of the empirical data, and during the writing to avoid “reinventing the wheel” (Bryman 2012a: 98). The literature review helps establish what has previously been studied and helps determine the gap in previous research. Furthermore, the literature review provides an understanding of the key theories and concepts in the area of research. Based on the literature review, a research design was created and was built on what Bryman (2012: 70) refers to as an ‘exemplifying case’. The critique against case study research is often due to its focus on one specific case and thus, questions how generalisable it is (Bryman 2012: 69). However, Yin (2009: 48) argues that in the ‘exemplifying case’ the intention is to: “capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation”. The chosen case study on Uganda, is to one extent unique as no conflict or peace context is exactly the same. However, many aspects of the context are recognisable in many of the contemporary conflicts and peace processes visible today. For example, in the ethnic/tribal aspect and its protracted nature. As such, despite being a specific case study, it provides insight into the complex nature of peacebuilding processes which can be applicable to other cases.

The interview guide was created based on the literature review and the research design, and was composed of five categories relating to peacebuilding and HIs: peace and conflict; inequality; development; national unity and ethnic divisions; and concluding general issues. The 11 semi-structured interviews conducted with local NGOs and INGOs in Uganda provided the empirical data of the research. The time-consuming nature of interviews and transcription meant that the process of transcribing was ongoing throughout the interviewing period. The empirical data was analysed through a thematic approach of themes and sub-themes relating to the original interview guide and based on frequently returning themes recognised throughout the interviews and the transcribing process. After the transcribing was completed, a first initial analysis was made purely based on the empirical data to allow it to speak for itself, absent from

theoretical influence (Creswell 2014: 29). After the initial analysis, more extensive previous research and theoretical research was conducted. Lederach's Conflict Transformation (CT) theory was central to the theoretical framework due to the focus on understanding the relationships which, he argues, lays the foundation for deep-rooted issues and the structures of a society. Furthermore, the emphasis on the different levels of peacebuilding; from top-level leadership to grassroots levels provided a tool to analyse the empirical data derived from both the grassroots levels and the middle-range leadership. Additionally, Stewart held a significant role due to her wide contributions in the area of HIs for which she has become widely referenced in the literature.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the empirical data upon which the research was based. The lack of data, both quantitative and qualitative, on group level inequalities, is both a consequence and evidence of the severe shortage of research on HIs (Stewart, Brown and Mancini 2005: 3; Stewart 2006: 7). As such, the interviews were essential to take the research beyond the data available on national level to understand the complexity of the context through a closer perspective focusing on regional and group differences.

Through an epistemological position referred to as 'interpretivism' the research seeks to understand the social world from the perspective of the participants themselves (Bryman, 2012: 380). The loose structure of the semi-structured interviews allows the interviewees to somewhat unrestrictedly steer the conversation how they wish. This to the extent to where they can linger on issues they consider are of high importance. Thus, the semi-structured interviews provide insight into the priorities of the interviewees themselves (Bryman 2012: 470).

The interviews were all conducted in English and no interpreter was needed. Furthermore, all the interviews were recorded, which was agreed upon at the start of each interview. Establishing trust between the participant and the researcher is imperative when conducting research, particularly interviews which intend to explore the reality of the participants, and especially when the research is on sensitive issues (Bahn and Weatherill 2013: 21). This is connected to the handling and presentation of the collected data in which the topic of anonymity becomes relevant. During the interview process, each interviewee was given the alternative to decide how and if, they wanted to remain anonymous. However, as the writing process proceeded, to protect all the interviewees to the greatest extent possible, all organisations and individuals have been coded both in-text and in the reference list.

Occasionally, difficulties arose in relation to the interview process. For example, surrounding noise levels during the recording of a small number of the interviews complicated the transcribing process. Other issues related to interviewees being relatively newly employed (within the year) meant that there were instances where they were careful to supply an answer or strongly emphasised that they were unsure due to not being present at the time, this related mostly to previous initiatives that had been taken. Reflections and issues on ethical terms are to be discussed later.

The interviewees

The local organisations provided a greater perspective of what the grassroots really wanted, expected and needed from the peacebuilding process, while simultaneously being able to recognise the structural dimensions of the process. The international organisation was slightly more disconnected from the interaction with the affected population, which is attributed to a mandate more often focused on monitoring and observing as opposed to the more hands-on approach of the local NGOs. However, this allowed the INGOs to have a more evaluative and critical view on how the peacebuilding process was going thus far, and to have a greater focus on the deep-rooted structural issues upon which other, more visible issues, were created.

Five local and six international organisations were interviewed, providing the empirical data of the research. The two types of organisations were approached based on previous research suggesting a potential difference between the two groups. This is also recognised in the CT theory by Lederach where he points to three different levels of the peacebuilding process where international and local organisations belong to the second and third ‘tracks’ of peacebuilding (1997: 38-39). The grassroots NGOs often engage directly with their targeted beneficiaries, this positions them in proximity to the affected population giving them greater access to the perceptions, needs, and feelings of the local population as well as, an understanding for the grievances, priorities and challenges that remain for individuals and communities.

The INGOs were instead expected to provide an overarching observational perspective (Lederach 1997: 39) as they are usually removed from the immediate challenges of individuals thus, complementing the local level in the peacebuilding process. Furthermore, local NGOs and INGOs may experience different restrictions, partners and budgets. The two groups may also have experienced the conflict and its aftermath differently, all of which may influence the perspectives on the peacebuilding process, what issues are prioritised, and what the main obstacles are for ensuring stability and peace. That said, it is relevant to highlight the occasional

difficulty of differentiating between the local and the international levels, as there were ‘pure’ international organisations with internationally leading staff and which had a regional or global presence elsewhere. Other organisations defined themselves as international due to international partner/mother organisations, but consisted of local staff and with mandate and activities more similar to the grassroots organisations. At times, the answers of such organisations were more aligned with the local organisations than with the international ones. Choosing the organisations was mainly based on the available information online, as well as through contacts at the Swedish Embassy, and through the organisations themselves. Considering the aim and interest of the research, the organisations were engaged in the field of peace and conflict, and/or focused on related topics such as development, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and human rights.

The interviews took place in three geographical locations across Uganda. The majority of them in Gulu, the largest city in the Acholi sub-region in the Northern Ugandan region, and was the heart of the LRA war and the ensuing peacebuilding process. Two interviews were conducted in Lira, the neighbouring district with a different dominating ethnic group compared to Gulu, and finally three interviews in Kampala, the capital. The three locations were chosen to attain a more complete understanding of the regional context as the location might influence the actors that the organisations engage with, how they perceive the conflict itself and the peacebuilding process. All of this could ultimately impact their mandate, priorities, and the opinions concerning what activities ought to take place. When attaining information and gathering the empirical data, the three locations and the different statuses (local or international) of the organisations were thus considered important factors for the research to attain a more wholesome understanding for the perspectives of the peacebuilding process.

Interview guide

One interview guide (appendix I) was created for all organisations, regardless of status (local or international) or location. By using the same categories and similar sets of questions, their differences and similarities became more prominent. The five categories setting the structure for the interviews were: peace and conflict; inequality; development; national unity and ethnic divisions; and concluding general issues of how they would like to see the process moving forward. The categories were chosen based on previous research related to peacebuilding and HIs, which is centred around politics, development, inequality and ethnic divisions. Asking open-ended questions on these categories, without alluding too strongly towards HIs, allowed

the interviewees to highlight whatever issues they perceived to be of priority. Furthermore, the categories intended to provide the research with both an understanding of the organisations' perceptions of the conflict setting, the current situation, the future they would like to see and the potential obstacles for getting there. As mentioned previously, the interviewees were encouraged to talk uninterruptedly with minimal interference to ensure that their opinions and perspectives came through as much as possible. This meant that the interview guide was merely that-- a guide. Questions followed the line of the discussion to reduce the risk of steering the conversation one way or another. As a qualitative researcher it is important to be aware of one's own bias and the subjectivity one may put on the research in terms of the what is perceived as important (Bryman 2012: 405) to minimise the impact on the empirical data and the course of the interviews. There was an awareness around this complexity while conducting the interviews so as to steer the conversations only so much to ensure that it stayed on topic with relevant information, but simultaneously allowing the interviewee relatively free range to express their priorities.

Soon after the interviewing process started it was realised that the themes were sufficient on their own as the specific questions were too narrow and too guiding. This was already suspected as the questions were very detailed and interlinked and thus, it was likely that a number of questions would be answered at the same time. However, being a beginner at conducting interviews for data collection, the questions provided a safety-net to fall back on which was needed less frequently as the process continued.

Analysis

The empirical data was analysed using a thematic approach organised by categories, themes and sub-themes. The transcribing process provided the initial analysis as the thorough detailing of each interview provided primary reflections (beyond that during the interviews themselves) and an overview of the most highlighted topics (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 180). Secondly, categories were extracted during a second more detailed reading. The categories were closely related to the five categories of which the interview guide had been created, with a few additions depending on frequent topics, questions and answers, including for example, past and future initiatives, and frustration. The third step was the creation and colour-coding of themes and sub-themes which were extracted through the mode of repetition, i.e. the topics frequently discussed were highlighted as their repetition suggested a common priority among the organisations (Bryman 2012: 580). One such theme was 'economic aspects' under which sub-

themes included for example, poverty, livelihood, unemployment, and economic empowerment.

The themes and sub-themes were also coded depending on their dimension of HIs. As the aspect of HIs and non-HIs can easily become interlinked, the coding aimed to differentiate between them. For example, economic issues were recognised as individual and communal issues without a recognition of regional or tribal differences. However, as soon as there was a recognition of regional or tribal dimensions to the situation, for example, that the north would be discriminated against or of political dimensions creating inequalities within the country, such acknowledgements highlighted a structural issue, which suggested a focus on HIs as opposed to an absolute situation or vertical inequalities (VIs). Finally, a table was created in which local and international organisations were divided. Following the structure of the various categories, each individual organisation and its highlighted sub-themes were noted and again colour-coded according to their umbrella theme colour for clearer overview. Lastly, the sub-themes of all organisations were clustered together as the main themes under each category were noted in the margins - with local and international organisations still divided.

At this point, a first complete text stating the general results and findings of the empirical data was presented, and soon thereafter the initial analysis took place. So far, the analytical process had seen limited incorporation of theories and theoretical background, beyond the initial literature review, which had created the categories for the interview guide. Such a method was employed to allow the empirical material to “speak for itself” (Creswell 2014: 29) and to protect the initial analysis of the empirical findings from being influenced by the theoretical framework or previous research. Finally, the empirical data has been analysed following a structure of the previously mentioned categories, now clustered into six areas. The empirical data and analysis were finally linked to already existing theory and main debates in the field of peacebuilding and HIs. The theoretical framework took an emphasis on the relational aspect of Lederach’s CT theory (1997), the three tracks of peacebuilding and bottom-up approaches. Furthermore, recognition of addressing root causes as vital to the peacebuilding process, as highlighted by McCoy (2008) was included, and Stewart (2000; 2006; 2010) provided the basis for the key concept on HIs due to being commonly referenced in literature on the topic, and because of her vast research on HIs.

Additionally, it was found that a natural consequence of the semi-structured approach meant that the order in which the five categories of the interview guide were discussed could vary. For example, during the interviewing process and the transcribing, it was noted that depending on how quickly the topic of national unity and ethnic divisions came up, the

conversation around development and inequality varied. If national unity and ethnic divisions were discussed prior to inequality, this topic was more likely to be discussed in terms of inequality in development within Uganda. However, when national unity and ethnic divisions came up later, inequality was overwhelmingly discussed in terms of gender equality, and development in terms of local and community development, as opposed to a reflection or comparison between regions.

Reflections and ethical considerations

As a researcher, part of the research process is to be aware of the ethical debates that may arise during the process, this to ensure that careful choices and considerations are consciously taken. A central ethical consideration is the 'do no harm' mentality which includes the confidentiality of records to protect the identity of the participants of the study (Bryman 2012: 136). The nature of this research poses an ethical issue due to its political discussions concerning the central state in a country which is considered partly free in terms of political and civil freedom and where opposition to the government is routinely prosecuted (Freedom House 2018). This research was therefore, conducted with complete anonymity with no names mentioned, neither individual nor organisations. The issue of anonymity was discussed on tape before or after the interviews to give the interviewees the chance to express their position on the matter, however, during the writing process, the executive decision to treat the organisations with complete anonymity was taken.

In all but one case were the interviewees contacted with weeks' notice informing them about the research. It was a careful area to navigate so as to reveal sufficient information to avoid the ethical dilemma of deception (Bryman 2012: 148) where the participants are unaware of the true nature of the research, but without giving detailed enough information so as to influence the course of the discussions. Furthermore, me, the researcher, has not conducted the study in a vacuum and as such, there is always a need to be cautious in terms of subjectivity and bias (Pillow 2003: 176). Being careful not to take sides or allowing my preconceptions to steer the conversation according to previous assumptions was important to avoid the research from becoming impacted by my moral and political agenda as opposed to truly reflecting the views of the participants (Bryman 2012: 149).

Additional ethical considerations relate to the sensitivity around the topic of HIs itself as it has been a source for tensions and conflict in the history of Uganda. Therefore, navigating the issue with caution and without forcing the issue of tribal inequality was important to avoid

the topic from causing rifts. Finally, the participants were given time to add or question things at the end of the interview so as to ensure that the interviews were not left with doubts or concerns.

Delimitations

Despite a lengthy history of conflict in Uganda and an enduring presence of HIs which has unmistakably impacted the current situation, the study has been confined to the most recent peacebuilding period related to the LRA conflict. It is thus, not exploring the protracted nature of the conflict beyond that which provides the contextual background for the current setting. Instead, the focus has remained with the role HIs have been given during the peacebuilding process as their impact on the Ugandan society has been immense. That said, although the study seeks to understand how HIs impact Uganda, the research revolves around the role of, and attention given to, HIs during peacebuilding process, with the intention of understanding how to minimise their impact as Uganda moves forward.

The peacebuilding process has been studied out of the perspective of civil society with a particular focus on what Lederach would define as Track II and III peacebuilding actors: grassroots NGOs and international NGOs. This is due to the interest in understanding the role given to HIs by peacebuilding actors during the peace process, and not necessarily the perception of HIs or how they are experienced, in which case the affected population would have been the targeted participants. Additionally, the limited scope of the research contributed to the decision to exclude the grassroots population to allow greater focus on civil society itself and the potential similarities and differences within this group of actors. Equally as the grassroots population has not taken part of this research, the top-level leadership at political levels has not had a role beyond that of what civil society discussed. The reasoning for this is primarily due to the substantial research already existing from this perspective. Although, there are relatively limited studies on the topic of HIs and peacebuilding, much of what exists, is in relation to the top-level leadership.

Furthermore, the interest of this research has not been to explore whether the subjective and objective HIs reflect one another. This is partly due to the lack of data to provide foundations for such thorough comparisons, but it is also due to wanting to understand the reality from the perspective of civil society, not in terms of quantitative data. Additionally, due to a vast range of issues discussed with the interviewees, the analysis has centred around HIs as the main interest area of the research. This includes minimising the focus around, for example, gender issues, which was frequently highlighted by the interviewees. Although it is

important to recognise that such issues have been greatly prioritised by the organisations, in relation to the research questions' focus on understanding the specific role that HIs have in the peacebuilding process, other issues, while still of importance to the peacebuilding process, have received limited attention in this study.

Previous research

The following section will look at previous research in the field of HIs and peacebuilding. Most of the research concerning HIs is in the context of conflict rather than its role during the peacebuilding process. However, a number of studies have been conducted focusing on for example, policy approaches aimed at the reduction of HIs with articles from the likes of Frances Stewart (2006) and Stewart, Brown, and Langer (2007). Additionally, research exploring the aspect of legal empowerment to reduce HIs includes scholars such as, Waldorf (2019), and Mustapha (2009) is among scholars studying the concept of 'affirmative action' in relation to HIs and peacebuilding.

The following section will outline previous research related to peacebuilding and approaches for reducing HIs. It starts by outlining traditional approaches to peacebuilding, such as statebuilding and economic development. This is of interest to the research due to them being, in many ways, mainstreamed approaches to peacebuilding. Therefore, when exploring the, at times rather meagre attempts to produce long-term stability, it is important to recognise and examine their strength and weaknesses to identify how they could be improved and developed. Additionally, combining them with other approaches could be beneficial to reach the end goal; long-term peace. Scholars with focus on HIs, including for example, Stewart, tend to suggest that traditional peacebuilding approaches are so-called 'blind' towards HIs. Upon outlining such claims, alternative approaches suggesting a more direct focus on HIs during the peacebuilding process are presented. Due to a relatively scarce number of studies on the topic, the research available addresses both approaches to correct HIs as preventative measures for avoiding conflict as well as, approaches in the post-conflict peacebuilding period. The section on previous research will be rounded up by looking at two case studies of in-depth research projects by Langer (2009) and McCoy (2008), focusing on Ghana and, Rwanda and Mali respectively.

Horizontal inequality and peacebuilding

In the report ‘Policies towards Horizontal Inequalities in Post-Conflict Reconstruction’ Stewart (2006) emphasises the importance of carefully taking HIs into account when approaching these methods;

“Normal economic policy package of liberalisation and market forces is not generally sufficient to reduce HIs, or even to prevent them widening, while democratic institutions are often not sufficient to prevent HIs arising on the political dimension.”

(Stewart 2006: 5)

Through this statement, Stewart argues that both economic and political dimensions of HIs are overlooked in traditional peacebuilding approaches such as economic development and statebuilding. It is suggested that such approaches to peacebuilding are insufficient in societies with a history of persistent group inequalities, as the neglect of HIs can instead contribute to increased hostility between groups and ultimately provoke violent conflict.

The purpose of statebuilding is the (re)building of institutions and the strengthening of the state apparatus, which is often considered vital for ensuring development and security in post-conflict settings (Tom 2017: 53). However, in societies with clear group divisions, political parties are often created along group identity with loyalty towards the group it belongs to and represents. This becomes problematic as, traditionally, statebuilding does not specify anything in terms of representation beyond that of multi-party democracy. In societies of deep HIs, Stewart (2006: 5) argues that the strength and capabilities of state institutions mean little if the mode of governance is coloured with salient and hostile group divisions, which can instead result in graver political exclusion rather than greater inclusion.

Economic development is centred around economic growth and poverty reduction, often by opening the markets and promoting privatisation and increased export (Smoljan 2003: 245). Such initiatives are intended to produce greater macro-economic stability, reduce poverty and create employment (Stewart, Brown and Langer 2007: 4). However, a major criticism for the ‘blindness’ of HIs in policies aimed at economic development is its failure to be context sensitive. In many countries in which such policies are introduced, Uganda included, ‘divide and rule’ policies originating from the colonial era have engrained HIs into the very structure of the society. As such, favourable and unfavourable conditions have been created across the country with usually one region or group having experienced long-term privilege compared to others (Stewart, Brown and Langer 2007: 18-9). It is thereby suggested that the privileged

group will experience disproportionate profit, as they are likely to find themselves in a more beneficial and enabling environment facilitating further development, while those less privileged remain several steps behind. Consequently, rather than contributing to a flourishing peacebuilding process, this can result in an exacerbation of already existing group inequalities.

Previous research specifically aimed at reducing HIs during peacebuilding is predominantly focused on top-level initiatives to reduce HIs through policy-making. These policies can broadly be divided into three categories: direct; indirect; and integrationist policies. Direct approaches include for example 'affirmative action' and policies which directly target and benefit the discriminated and unprivileged group (Waldorf 2019: 443). It includes for example, quotas in employment, education, decision-making positions (Mustapha 2009: 561), and access to housing (Stewart, Brown and Langer 2007: 18). Introducing such policies are however, at risk of increasing frustration among the group/s not benefitting from this preferential treatment and ultimately could reinforce group divisions rather than mend them. Therefore, the indirect approaches are often preferred.

Indirect policies are universally implemented policies affecting everyone in the society but should result in greater benefits for the disadvantaged group, thus contributing to reducing group inequalities (Waldorf 2019: 443). Such policies include investment over regions, human rights legislation and enforcement, regional development programmes, taxation and so on (Stewart, Brown, and Langer 2007: 7). These policies are less likely to stir up salient group divisions and inter-group hostilities, however, in societies where HIs are so deeply engrained into the society, investment in public services and infrastructure (often part of regional development programmes), is suggested to be insufficient for closing the gap between groups.

The third approach is less frequently discussed, due largely to the focus on contributing to integration rather than the reduction of HIs. A benefit of the integrationist approaches is suggested to be their potential for reducing hostile attitudes and stereotypes thus, contributing to greater unity (Interview C 2019). This may in turn, contribute to the reduction of HIs. Integrationist approaches include ban on ethnic/religious political groups, mixed schools, and the promotion of an over-arching national identity (Stewart, Brown and Langer 2007: 7).

Beyond state initiatives, the international community and civil society have potential to contribute to the reduction of HIs in their peacebuilding efforts. While there is much less research on this topic, in the case where the state is unwilling to commit to reducing HIs, other actors could be relevant. Stewart (2000: 258) suggests that in situations where the state is reluctant to commit to the reduction of HIs, the international community ought to impose greater conditions on the state to do so. Along the lines of the conditionalities imposed by the

IMF and the World Bank on their loan-takers, Stewart suggests that donors and investors of the international community ought to place conditions on states to reduce HIs in order to receive support. This, however, raises an issue in terms of local ownership over the peacebuilding process and to what extent the international community has a right to make such demands.

Langer (2009)

In his article ‘Living with Diversity: the peaceful management of horizontal inequalities in Ghana’, Langer (2009) does *not* explore how HIs result in violent conflict, but instead focuses on the peaceful management of such inequalities to avoid conflict from erupting. The case of Ghana is interesting and, similarly to the case of Uganda, has been characterised by a north-south divide due to ethnic, social and economic divisions. Although Ghana has experienced occasional political instability and ethnic tensions, major violent conflict has been avoided (Langer 2009: 535). By exploring quantitative data over political representation, the enactment of political policies, and presenting the origin and continuation of socioeconomic inequalities, Langer presents the case Ghana and its relation to HIs.

Langer (2009) presents two major factors to the containment of conflict; the role of the state and the role of identity. The research is largely focused on the top-level leadership and its efforts to reduce HIs through indirect policy approaches, for example by recognising minority languages (Ibid.: 542). It is suggested that the state created an environment where ethnic belonging and identity was accepted, while also promoting a national identity under which all Ghanians belong. Langer’s (2009) case study on Ghana highlights the power of the state in reducing ethnic tensions to the degree that wide-scale stability has been maintained. Although it should not be ignored that there have been serious threats to this stability, it has, nevertheless, remained. While severe socioeconomic inequalities have been present throughout the history of Ghana, suggesting an inability or inefficiency to appropriately eliminate them, the political willingness and determination to minimise their existence as well as, a commitment to political inclusion has seemingly been sufficient to contain HIs from triggering violent conflict. As such, Langer (2009: 542) highlights how salient group divisions could, in part thanks to the unequivocal commitment of political leaders, live side-by-side peacefully.

McCoy (2008)

McCoy (2008) analyses the post-conflict peacebuilding processes in Mali and Rwanda. The intention of the research is to look at how the peacebuilding in the two case studies have been

approached to provide a future practitioners guide for policymakers and others in the field. The particular focus for this is the rectifying of HIs which McCoy claims, is available to read in theory, however, less frequently realised in practice (2008: 131). There are also brief remarks about the role of the international community in the peacebuilding process, which is considered having plentiful experience in the field of peacebuilding.

McCoy argues for the importance of three sides of any peace process: peace agreement; truth and reconciliation; and access in terms of citizenship, property and identity. In terms of peace agreements, he highlights issues such as allowing realistic time for the peace process, without which, a too hurried peace process is likely to take place with risk of the peace falling through (McCoy 2008: 122). Secondly, he highlights the importance of including as many actors as possible into the peace process, and thirdly, the necessity to address the root causes of the conflict is emphasised. The next focus has a greater emphasis on HIs. McCoy suggests that by neglecting the dimension of HIs during development and post-conflict settings could result in missing signs for potential mobilisation (McCoy 2008: 123). Continuing on this route, McCoy emphasises the need for developing structures for peace by addressing issues of economic, social, political and refugee injustices.

Truth and reconciliation, McCoy claims, is important for the population and society to heal after experiencing atrocious acts of war. Without such processes, including truth-telling and the admitting of acts regardless of whether they are made in the name of the state or its opponent, McCoy claims trust will not be developed, and without this, he argues, cooperation will not exist (2008: 129). In such divided societies, where mistrust is likely to characterise the society, truth and reconciliation processes are therefore vital to the peace process. Lastly, McCoy emphasises the need for inclusiveness in the society where the population is free from discrimination of any sort (he gives the example of citizenship and land access) on the basis of identity. Throughout his research, realising a peace process where inclusion, reunion and fairness across all groups has thus, been the emphasis for McCoy and is the overarching three categories he deems vital to create circumstances favourable for peace.

My contribution

The contribution of this thesis is its focus on civil society and its perspective on, and the role it gives to, HIs in its peacebuilding efforts, as opposed to the currently overwhelming emphasis on top-level leadership approaches. As such, this thesis takes a more local position compared to previous research by allowing civil society, through grassroots level-based organisations and

international organisations, claim centre stage of the research. This will be analysed through a theoretical framework led by Lederach's 'conflict transformation' (CT) theory. Furthermore, McCoy contributes by emphasising the need to address root causes of conflicts and the need for reconciliation, together with Stewart and Hillesund who provide the key concepts and essential understanding of the prevalence of HIs in the context of conflict and peace.

Theoretical framework and key concepts

This chapter will establish the theoretical framework and the relevant key concepts of the research. The first section addresses HIs, as well as, explores their contribution to the escalation of violent conflict. Stewart (2000), being the most influential in theorising the connection between HIs and conflict, holds a central role for understanding how the two are connected. The following section centres around the prominent peace researcher Lederach and his CT theory. In its most simplistic explanation the CT theory is; "[...] an understanding that conflict is a normal social occurrence and, therefore, focus on the transformation of the violent *conduct* into a peaceful one" (Paffenholz 2014: 13). In other words, it highlights the need for transforming violent management of conflict to a peaceful one. Additionally, the emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict during peacebuilding is recognised through McCoy (2008), and, the three 'Tracks' of peacebuilding actors as according to Lederach's CT theory provides insight into the suggested roles of peacebuilding actors. Finally, the aspect of local ownership over the peacebuilding process is discussed.

Horizontal inequality

HIs are, in contrast to the more frequently discussed *vertical inequalities* between individuals, inequalities between groups. These groups can be based on the premises of for example, religion, gender, age, ethnicity (Stewart, Brown, and Mancini 2005), or as in the case of Uganda, a combination of tribal belonging and on regional basis. HIs can be divided into four categories. The three main dimensions are; political, economic, and social. The fourth one, the cultural dimension, applies to the hierarchical status between different groups' cultural norms, languages and the customs they practice (Brown and Langer 2010: 29; Stewart 2010: 2). However, the focus here will remain with HIs in the economic, social and political spheres as they are the most frequently recognised spaces within the study of HIs.

Political HIs are concerned with access to, and distribution of, political power and opportunities; including the presidency and ministerial posts, the distribution and control over

local and regional government, the parliament, the army, and the police (Stewart 2010: 2). Arguably the main consequence of political HIs, is its impact on economic and social HIs. While an imbalance in political power does not automatically entail inequalities in the economic and/or social dimensions, they do hold significant power over the distribution of resources in a country (Hillesund 2019: 531), and thereby holds significant power over potential creation or efforts to minimise socioeconomic HIs. The economic dimension include assets such as, land, livestock as well as, infrastructure (Stewart 2000: 250), but also refers to income levels and employment opportunities – including both governmental and private sectors as well as, the level of skilled contra unskilled labour (Stewart 2000: 249; Brown and Langer 2010: 29). Social inequalities on the other hand are in terms of access to a wide range of services including healthcare and education, but also the general state of wellbeing including poverty levels and access to drinking water (Ibid.; Ibid.) as well as, the *outcomes* of the services available (Stewart 2010: 2).

The presence of HIs in a society do not categorically entail that violent conflict erupts. However, increasingly, conflicts with elements of HIs at the root of the conflict based along ethnic lines, tribes, religions and regional demarcations are taking place and it is important to understand how the two, HIs and conflict, impact one another. The HIs hypothesis states: ‘[...] when cultural differences coincide with economic and political differences between groups, this can cause deep resentment that may lead to violent struggles’ (Stewart and Brown 2007: 222 in Stewart 2010: 1). In other words, it is suggested that it is the presence of political and economic inequality combined with, and along the lines of, distinctively different cultural groups, which contributes to the rise of inter-group hostilities which increases the likelihood of armed conflict.

However, while Stewart emphasises the importance of a *combination* of socioeconomic and political HIs to result in violent conflict, Hillesund (2019) argues that the development of violent conflict is not dependent on the combination of HIs, but that the target for addressing such imbalances depends on the dimension of HIs. She claims that when a group is economically disadvantaged, both civil war (including the state) and communal war (not including the state) is likely. However, when the hostilities are due to political exclusion the target becomes the government (Ibid.). The target, she argues, lies in the agency for change and power, in which correcting political exclusion is addressed through the central government, while this is not necessarily the case for economic HIs where political exclusion is not a factor (Hillesund 2019: 549).

Another escalating factor is that of objective and subjective HIs. Barrows in Brown and Langer (2010: 45) suggests that; “[...] a subjective estimate of horizontal inequalities [is] the

strongest predictor of violence”. However, this does not entail that objective HIs are not significant for the development of conflict. Objective HIs can lay the foundation for grievances which may contribute to tensions. However, the addition of negative perception towards this inequality and discrimination is likely to be the decisive factor for tensions turning violent (Hillesund 2019: 3). This is relevant to this research as understanding and addressing the subjective HIs could prove to be vital to the peacebuilding process. As will be discussed, major bitterness and frustration is aimed at the Ugandan government due to the perception that it is unwilling to commit to reducing HIs and develop the north. Such negativity remains despite great efforts made by civil society to address the needs of the people as the seeming reluctance of the government reinforces group hostilities as the perception that the north is ignored and neglected, remains.

Theoretical Framework

Lederach’s CT theory centres around the need for transforming hostile relationships into peaceful ones. By reconstructing relationships, it is argued, peacebuilding moves beyond only addressing the immediate problems presented at the surface, to creating constructive change. It is said that by solving the underlying issues, which left unsolved are likely to continue triggering conflict (Lederach 1997), the development of sustainable and long-term peace is possible. Furthermore, Lederach suggests the importance of approaching the peacebuilding process with a vision for peace, also in terms of how short-term initiatives are approached. This, he argues, is even more important in societies of deep-rooted issues (1997: 78). This resonates with the Ugandan case, which has seen a reoccurrence of violent conflict during its post-independent era as a result of mistrust, patrimonial politics, and the idea that political power and security is achieved through violent means (Lomo and Hovil 2014: 15, 20).

In addition to rebuilding broken relationships in which hostility resides, the CT theory encompasses;

“[...] a deep transformation in the institutions and discourses that reproduce violence, as well as in the conflict parties themselves and their relationships. It corresponds to the underlying tasks of structural and cultural peacebuilding.”

(Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2016: 35)

The most commonly cited work of Lederach for his CT theory is his book from 1997, ‘Building Peace; Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies’. Here, Lederach presents his

three 'tracks' through which peacebuilding approaches take place. Track I refers to the top level leadership of key political and military leaders (Lederach 1997: 38). Track II includes middle-range leadership which refers to actors such as, ethnic and religious leaders, leaders of humanitarian NGOs, academics and intellectuals. While Track III comprises of the grassroots leadership thus, includes for example local leaders and leaders of indigenous NGOs (Ibid.: 39). The three Tracks provides a useful tool for analysing the roles and activities of both the state and civil society during peacebuilding processes. This is significant to the analysis of this research as the influence of these actors can sway the direction of the peacebuilding process. A closer insight on the peacebuilding actors can contribute to the understanding of how they can aid or hinder the peacebuilding process. Their actions and inactions are relevant to understand how potential initiatives and projects may contribute to a stable and peaceful Uganda, or to its relapse into conflict.

Track I approaches to building peace are largely revolved around what is often considered conflict resolution as they, according to Lederach, primarily focus on immediate problem-solving issues through top-level negotiations, the establishing of a ceasefire and taking on the role as mediators (Ibid. 39, 45). This creates an environment which enables the following stages of peacebuilding. However, as will be discussed in the context of Uganda, limiting their role to such a narrow definition greatly underestimates the power and influence such actors hold over other levels involved in the peacebuilding process.

Track II, is according to Lederach the most vital level to the peacebuilding process due to its position between the local grassroots level and the top-level leadership giving it access and potential to influence several levels of the peacebuilding (Lederach 1997: 60-1). Furthermore, it is considered to facilitate the process of resolving and managing deeper issues that are often at the root of the protracted nature of many current conflicts (Ibid.: 47). McCoy (2008: 123), also emphasises the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts, however, primarily through Track I initiatives, during the negotiations of peace accords. He suggests that when HIs are left unaddressed, relapse of conflict is very likely. However, in the case of Uganda, where HIs were recognised as a root cause of the conflict, the commitment to reduce HIs, which was outlined in national peacebuilding projects, have shown to be insufficient as HIs remain a destructive component in Uganda. This suggests that the attention given to HIs during the initial stage of the peacebuilding process has thus far, been insufficient. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the analysis, efforts to address HIs among Track II actors are rather limited. This will be explored and discussed in greater detail in relation to the result and analysis of the empirical data.

Track III, grassroots level leadership, is the level expected to reach the largest amount of people through its initiatives according to Lederach (1997: 43). Furthermore, it is considered the best level for addressing and tending to the direct needs of the affected population. However, there is little recognition from Lederach on how these actors can be restricted or influenced by Track I and II, for example, due to their resource dependency from international sponsors and donors. A significant criticism aimed at the CT theory is the neglect of recognising how the grassroots levels may be limited in the absence of state initiatives, or how the power balance between the three levels may influence the course of the peacebuilding (Fetherston 2000: 207). This has also been recognised by several of the interviewees.

There has been a significant shift in the field of peacebuilding where bottom-up approaches and the ‘local’ (which in itself carries an interesting debate which this thesis will not elaborate on) are being increasingly agreed upon on as the prominent approach towards building peaceful societies (Lederach 1997; Weiss, Daws, and Paris 2018). Compared to previous lines of top-down approaches, this recent approach involves grassroots levels and the interests and needs of the local population, and with greater sensitivity towards the context in which the peacebuilding is taking place (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2016: 267). Lederach has come to be a fierce advocate for the ‘local’ in peacebuilding. For example, he states that peacebuilding “[...] must face and adapt to the realities and dilemmas posed by the very nature of these conflicts” (Lederach 1997: 147). Furthermore, Lederach (1997: 84) states that processes of mending relationships must be rooted in the conflict setting itself, in his words “[i]t must emerge creatively from the culture and context, but not be a slave of either”.

The theoretical framework provides the analytical foundation for the empirical data. In relation to McCoy’s (2008) root causes and Lederach’s (1997) vision for peace, the analysis explores the relevance of HIs in Uganda’s past and future as discussed by the interviewees. Furthermore, the aspect of local ownership of the peace process is closely related to Lederach’s three Tracks. On the one hand, it explores criticism towards top-down approaches to peacebuilding as recognised by the interviewees. On the other hand, it discusses the similarities and differences in terms of their perspective on both the conflict and the peacebuilding process, as highlighted by Track II and III peacebuilding actors, to understand how a combination of perspectives could improve the peacebuilding approaches.

The relational aspect of the CT theory is integral to this analysis as it is suggested that the continuation of HIs in Uganda’s history and their prevalence in Uganda today, is attributed to broken and hostile relations based on tribal animosity. The poor relationships have manifested themselves in the structure of the Ugandan society. Thus, to understand the

peacebuilding process and the potential for building sustainable peace in Uganda, understanding the relations upon which the risk of conflict resides is crucial to this study. Finally, the three Tracks of peacebuilding provide the analytical tool for exploring the potential of different peacebuilding actors and their ability to either facilitate or obstruct the development of the peacebuilding process.

Background

Uganda is a landlocked country in Eastern Africa. With a population of 40.9 million people ('Uganda — The World Factbook' 2019). The largest ethnic group is the Bagandan tribe located largely at the centre of the country and stands for 16.5% of the population. The Acholi tribe is the 8th largest tribe at 4.4% of the population (Ibid.). The 10 largest tribes make up just under 70% of the population, and smaller tribes make up the remaining 30% (Ibid.), suggesting a wide number of small tribes making up the Ugandan demographic. Furthermore, many tribes speak their own language, although English is the official language and is taught in school (Ibid.).

A history of HIs in Uganda stretches far beyond the current regime, which came to power in 1986. HIs have been present in Ugandan since before its colonised days. However, they were greatly exacerbated and exploited during the colonisation as the British rulers adopted “divide and rule” policies effectively splitting the country into different regions to maximise economic gain and ensure political control (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010: 6; Otunnu 2002: 11-2). As a result of a cooperative South, dominated by Baganda Kingdom and the Bantu speaking population they were awarded with the administrative branch of the protectorate, universities, and infrastructural development. From this, stereotypes of the south as useful, productive and of great competence was born (Lomo and Hovil 2004: 18). The northern tribes on the other hand were branded as unruly and brutal, unfit for political administration (Branch 2010: 31). The tribal stereotypes and hostilities that were exacerbated during the colonial period continued after independence in 1962.

The Northern Conflict

Since 1962, Uganda has seen several shifts in power between different tribal groups and geographical regions. Such changes have not only been accomplished through violent force, but their reigns have been tainted by severe atrocities, grave human rights violations and widespread impunity. All of this has accumulated into a country and people fearing and mistrusting one another (Lomo and Hovil 2004: 15). Furthermore, as politics were organised along tribal and regional lines, controlling the political branch was perceived as the only way

to ensure the protection of the group one belonged to, which resulted in the mentality that attaining and maintaining political power at all costs was essential (Ibid.: 17).

The Northern conflict began in 1986 and started as a rebellion against the south and south-west dominated government, which was perceived as a threat to the security of the Acholi tribe (Lomo and Hovil 2004: 10). The Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions between the Government of the Republic of Uganda and the LRA was signed in 2007 ('Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions' 2007). However, the infamous LRA leader, Kony, was not present during its signing and the LRA was never dissolved or completely defeated and they still remain active in neighbouring countries ('History: The Lord's Resistance Army Conflict' 2015).

For a long time, the northern conflict was considered just that, a northern conflict. The national rifts that had decades in the making, left the Acholi sub-region on their own as the LRA, also predominately Acholi, were allowed to roam free without any intervention by the state as the government painted the conflict an 'Acholi issue' rather than a national issue (Branch 2010: 39). Branch (2010: 43) argued that such unwillingness was "[d]eriving from the lack of [Acholi] national political elite, the exclusion of legitimate Acholi representatives from the government, the repression of Acholi opposition leadership, and the failure of the Acholi diaspora to engage meaningfully in Ugandan politics". Thus, putting great emphasis on the impact of major HIs in the political arena on the conduct and attitudes towards the conflict.

In 2007, when the Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions was signed between the Government of Uganda and representation from the LRA, the emphasis on addressing the HIs that were engrained into the very societal structures of the country received significant attention. The Agreement was, however, characterised with vague commitments and unclear specifics, goals and implementation alike ('Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions' 2007). Shortly after, the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) of Northern Uganda was outlined. The plan promised several new initiatives, including security, road accessibility, access to water, sanitation, education and healthcare services, micro-financing initiatives to create economic development and opportunity, industrialisation, and reintegration with a particular focus on Northern Uganda (Republic of Uganda 2007: 19). The PRDP suggested a commitment by the government, which had not been witnessed previously. However, as will be discussed in the analysis, based on statements by the interviewees, the PRDP was not the promise-land it had potential to become.

Results and analysis

The analysis starts by exploring HIs as the root cause of the conflict and the continued presence of such inequalities in the country. Secondly, the vision for peace is outlined, after which a debate on the local as part of the peace process is discussed. Thereafter, the relational structures in Uganda and their impact on the peacebuilding is explored, and finally, the three Tracks of peacebuilding actors, as proposed by the CT theory, are analysed in terms of their impact on the process of building peace in Uganda.

Root Causes of the Conflict

A number of organisations have recognised the longevity of HIs in Uganda's history dating back prior to the Northern conflict. However, HIs along regional and tribal dimensions were also recognised as the leading root cause of the Northern conflict by the majority of the organisations, with INGOs somewhat more prone to name it a root cause compared to their NGO counterparts (interviews C 2019; D 2019; F 2019; G 2019; H 2019; I 2019; K 2019). It was argued that the Northern region experienced major social and economic inequality, as a consequence of political HIs (interviews J 2019; K 2019; A 2019). This had resulted in the Northern region being less developed than other regions; with its population having less access to services and were discriminated in terms of resource allocation (interviews G 2019; H 2019; I 2019; K 2019), which was recognised as an underlying factor for the conflict erupting.

McCoy (2008: 107) suggests that to maintain a sustainable and long-term peace, addressing the root causes of the conflict is crucial to the success and validity of the peace process. In the Ugandan context, the HIs were attributed to salient group dynamics resulting in development and resource allocation being distributed along tribal lines. The inequality and grievances that the north experienced reinforced already existing mistrust and hostile perceptions towards the tribal group now dominating the government. One organisation stated that a root cause of the conflict was that “[...] people in this [northern] region felt abandoned by the central government” (interview F 2019). The discrimination and sense of abandonment of the north by the south-western dominated government was said to fuel and exacerbate existing tribal hostilities which laid the foundation for the two decade long war that followed (interviews F 2019; D 2019; J 2019).

The HIs in Uganda were discussed primarily in terms of service delivery and to a large extent in terms of economic disparities (interview A 2019). Both poverty and unemployment were acknowledged, leaving the north unstable and lagging behind other regions of Uganda,

which gave, particularly young men, incentives to take up arms (interviews C 2019; J 2019). The economic issues were in part highlighted in their isolation i.e. without a deeper, structural issue and without an aspect of differences depending on group belonging or geographical location, but in other cases it was attributed to the North being particularly disadvantaged compared to others. In general, NGOs were less likely to attribute the root cause of the conflict to HIs and focused on the grievances of the population as opposed to a structural issue beyond such realities. INGOs almost exclusively stated HIs as the root cause of the problem, often even as the sole cause of it pointing to political impact and tribal rivalry for the inequality experienced in the Acholi sub-region (interviews E 2019; B 2019; A 2019).

The relative division between the two groups of organisations on the root causes is a strong indication that the activities and perspectives that Lederach assigned the two Tracks (II and III) in his CT theory aligns with the reality of Uganda. Lederach suggested that Track II peacebuilding actors, including INGOs, possess a structural understanding of the deeper issues in a conflict- and peace-setting (Lederach 1997: 60-1). Such understanding and perspective of the situation has arguably been acquired by their somewhat removed position from the immediate activities on the ground due to their place between the top-level leadership and the grassroots levels. In contrast, NGOs whose mandate at large involve direct service delivery and are deeply engaged with the local population and the victims of the conflict, held a perspective of the root causes much closer to the affected individuals and communities they engage with – similar to the observation of Lederach (1997: 42, 52-3). In other words, the local NGOs focused on the immediate situation of the Northern region, while the INGOs highlighted the comparison between regions thus, emphasising not only the visible grievances of the north, but did so in relation to other regions, i.e. recognising HIs.

Furthermore, it was claimed by the organisations, regardless of status or the root causes they named, that the root causes of the conflict remain still today. It was said that the government has been absent and unwilling to engage in the peacebuilding process, and it was argued that it was civil society that has been pulling the weight in terms of developing the region. For example, creating economic opportunities and addressing the lack of service delivery was among the most common activities and initiatives that had been taking place among the organisations (interviews A 2019; D 2019; C 2019; H 2019; G 2019; B 2019), yet, despite all the initiatives, the issues remain. Without undermining the activities and initiatives taken by the various organisations, as well as, acknowledging that peacebuilding is a complex process and the root causes of the conflict are deeply engrained into the Ugandan society, the longevity of HIs could point to either an inability or lack of capacity to solve them. This is not

intended as a critique towards individual actors engaged in the peacebuilding process, but instead a recognition that HIs remains, in theory and practice, still relatively new in the field of peacebuilding. As stated, traditional peacebuilding, the favoured approaches for a long time in peacebuilding work, has overlooked HIs in their efforts to create peace. As such, it is possible that HIs have remained in Uganda, as limited approaches aimed specifically at correcting them have been included in the peace efforts.

Vision for peace

“[...] we must respond to immediate crises in a manner that is informed by a longer-term vision. Our capacity to respond to the short-term agenda is more fully developed than is our capacity to take a longer-term view and see distant goals strategically reflected in our short-term action. This is especially important in dealing with protracted conflicts fuelled by perceptions dating back generations.”

(Lederach 1997: 78)

The long-term vision for peace was spread and overall rarely reflected the root causes of the conflict, despite HIs being recognised as a major underlying issue with long presence in Uganda. Only two INGOs specified HIs in terms of development as part of their vision for peace by emphasising that as long as regional inequalities exist, peace will remain undermined and unstable (interviews F 2019; G 2019). This view supports the literature on HIs and conflict, which suggests that HIs will always increase the likelihood of conflict (Stewart 2000) and thus, there may always be a threat to the sustainable peace if left unaddressed. Despite the general recognition of its impact on the Ugandan society, the focus and vision for peace was found elsewhere.

Although economic opportunity and poverty eradication was emphasised, this was, similarly to other issues highlighted as part of the vision for peace, in relation to the consequences of the conflict. As opposed to the two INGOs which recognised the need to address HIs in this vision, the economic aspect was often highlighted in terms of correcting the consequences following the war. This could potentially be problematic and undermine the peace efforts. Similar to the critique against traditional peacebuilding approaches, in the context of HIs, efforts and long-term visions concerning economic disparities without acknowledging *how* and *why* they exist, could end up overlooking the structural dimension and as a result, the underlying issues could go unaddressed and never truly disappear.

Instead, the vision for peace had a stronger focus on justice, compensation and reparations through a transitional justice (TJ) policy. This was a prominent issue on the basis that it obstructed the peace process and denied those affected by the conflict the ability to reconcile with the past and move on (interviews K 2019; F 2019; B 2019; E 2019). Stressing the issue of justice was both in terms of ending impunity for perpetrators of violence, but also to ensure that victims and the northern population were compensated adequately for their losses in terms of land, cattle and livelihood. The focus on justice was in regard to correcting and addressing the consequences of the conflict. The reluctance of the Ugandan government to authorise the legal procedures, despite calls from civil society and the public, was perceived to be due to its desire to protect itself (interviews J 2019; K 2019). It was widely recognised that atrocities took place in the hands of both sides during the conflict, yet only the LRA was investigated by the ICC (interview J 2019). The lack of a TJ policy was considered a major obstacle to peace as the reluctance to compensate the victims for their losses contributed to a frustration among the population towards the government which reinforced the perceptions of abandonment and inequality which had been a root cause of the conflict (interview B 2019).

Overall, the vision for peace was primarily concerned with issues on the ‘surface’ and consequences of the conflict, rather than on correcting the issues that had resulted in the conflict, or the issues at hand, to begin with. Furthermore, on many occasions, there was no concrete vision for the peace, and although there was, between some of the organisations, an agreement in terms of justice and TJ policy, a united vision for peace towards which all organisations were working, was missing. As argued by Lederach (1997: 78), the long-term vision is particularly important in protracted conflicts that are fuelled by perceptions that date decades back. This very much applies to the context in Uganda and although Lederach is a prominent peace researcher, his word is by no means law. However, it does pose the question as to how effective the peace processes can be without a clear vision of where it is going, and preferably it ought to be shared among the actors involved in the peacebuilding efforts to ensure that their efforts and resources are utilised as effectively as possible.

Local Peacebuilding

The following section will discuss the concept of local peacebuilding, also known as bottom-up approaches to peace. The analysis will briefly engage in two different aspects of the debate; (1) the criticism of top-down peacebuilding, and (2) the differences in perspectives between the NGOs and the INGOs and the problematics around completely relying on the perspectives of the grassroots levels.

The top-level leadership in Uganda was primarily criticised for its unwillingness to engage in the peace process, and the initiatives that have been taken were largely criticised for being disconnected from the needs of the affected population (interviews D 2019; B 2019; G 2019; J 2019). The support for bottom-up approaches stems from the idea of local ownership in which the peacebuilding efforts reflect the needs of the masses. Furthermore, there is a focus on context sensitivity as the post-conflict reconstruction is based on the considerations of local traditions and the culture in which the peace process is taking place (Lederach 1997: 52-3). The knowledge to build a sustainable peace is thus, thought to be acquired through engaging with the grassroots levels that live in, and experience, the realities of the peacebuilding context.

The main claims about the PRDP developed by the state, was that it was primarily focused on building infrastructure and strengthening the institutions in the region (interviews G 2019; J 2019; D 2019). One organisation did emphasise the immediate need for such initiatives, and recognised that actions had been taken in terms of building transport infrastructure, strengthening weak institutions, and the promotion of good governance on local and regional level (interview I 2019). However, such initiatives, it was generally stated, did not reflect the needs of the people, and the perception was that no efforts were being taken to develop the region (interviews G 2019; F 2019; D 2019). Alternatively, it was argued that statebuilding approaches aimed at rebuilding and strengthening institutions were largely perceived as having little to no impact on the lives of the Acholi sub-region (interviews G 2019; J 2019).

The perceived failure to address the grievances of the population resulted in a number of organisations calling for bottom-up approaches to the peacebuilding process (interviews F 2019; J 2019; K 2019). The initiatives of the top-level has, as stated, primarily been statebuilding approaches, seasoned and go-to approaches to peacebuilding, however its impact, according to civil society, has been meagre. Despite clear disappointment and frustration towards the government's actions, or inactions, there were also calls among organisations that the state ought to engage more in macro-level initiatives, and economic and social infrastructure (interviews G 2019; F 2019). There are thus conflicting statements in terms of statebuilding and infrastructure initiatives; (1) initiatives are being taken but do not reflect the needs of the people and are perceived as not benefitting the population, and (2) more statebuilding initiatives are needed as current ones are insufficient.

Similar to the critique against the PRDP, government funded livelihood programmes were criticised for not reaching the intended beneficiaries. The main issue was attributed to the application process of the programs, which meant that parts of the affected population for which

it was intended were unable to receive benefits. This was credited to the fact that the information of their existence was not common knowledge, and the lack of schooling as a consequence of the conflict or other circumstances, left intended beneficiaries illiterate and unable to complete the application form (interviews D 2019; B 2019). This is another aspect in which engaging with the grassroots levels and the intended beneficiaries can greatly impact and improve the implementation of the initiatives. By giving the grassroots level greater ownership over the peacebuilding process, initiatives would not only address the needs of the people, but the implementation would be adapted to the realities of those it seeks to reach. Furthermore, greater inclusion could result in improved perception of the peacebuilding process and the actors involved, and thus, both objective and subjective HIs could be improved.

The NGOs primarily focused on issues arising following the conflict. A strong emphasis was put on psychosocial support, livelihood programs, intra-communal conflict resolution with an emphasis on land conflict, increasing access to services such as, healthcare and education, and gender issues, including gender based violence (GBV) and the empowerment of women (interviews A 2019; B 2019; C 2019; D 2019; E 2019). Such initiatives reflect the approaches assigned to the grassroots levels by Lederach in his CT theory, which suggests that Track III initiatives are aimed at addressing the immediate needs of the population, and through their initiatives, they reach more people than any other level. (Lederach 1997: 39, 52). The NGOs are positioned close to the context in which they are active and get an insight into the grievances of the beneficiaries they engage with. Addressing the most immediate needs were considered a vital part of the peace process, because if left unaddressed they complicate other aspects of the process. One organisation, referring to poverty and the need for livelihood programmes, stated that: “you need to heal, but you cannot heal when you are hungry” (interview A 2019).

International organisations recognised similar immediate issues, however, they were more likely (although not alone), to acknowledge the structural aspects creating them. Particularly a focus on regional inequalities as a result of political involvement was recognised. It was claimed that the Acholi sub-region was lagging behind other parts of the country, especially in terms of socioeconomic issues such as, higher levels of poverty, access to services, infrastructure, and allocation of resources and investment (interviews H 2019; G 2019; I 2019; D 2019; C 2019). This was attributed to discrimination in the national budget where the North was supposedly not ‘getting its share of the national cake’ (interview J 2019) as a result of tribal politics.

The contribution of different perspectives, in this case the middle-range leadership through INGOs, provides an alternative understanding of the issues in Uganda. The perspective

of the local is, in its own right, vital for the affected population and could be essential to the survival of the people. However, that is not to say that the local is all-knowing. Many of the issues they are focusing on have a foundation in HIs. Although many of the local NGOs recognised the existence of HIs and its impact on the Ugandan society, it was, compared to INGOs, rarely a focal point. Recognising the different contributions and perspectives on the peacebuilding process could result in a greater variety of solutions. The different perspectives, NGOs being engaged with the grassroots and the INGOs primarily monitoring and observing the situation, supplies them with different sources of information. Although this study recognises the importance of building peace from below, it is necessary to note that including other actors should not have to entail ignoring the grassroots level, but instead providing supplementary knowledge.

Currently, approaches to address HIs, aside from top-level approaches, are very limited. This could in part explain why NGOs have such a strong emphasis on addressing the immediate issues as opposed to the underlying structures creating them; data and approaches are simply not available. Alternatively, it could be attributed to the limited reach and capacity that NGOs have, being donor dependent and often smaller in size. Taking on structural issues might thus, be outside of their capacities. However, in the case of Uganda, where NGOs and INGOs agree in terms of the structural issues that create many of the visible and immediate issues that the NGOs are addressing, bottom-up peacebuilding through middle-range actors, with more resources and greater insight into the structural complexities, could be an alternative. Again, however, the reality is, approaches available to address HIs from anything besides the top-level leadership, are at the moment, largely absent.

The Structure of Relational Dynamics

A central part of Lederach's CT theory is transforming underlying structures to change hostile relations into peaceful ones (1997). In the Ugandan context, broken relationships have fuelled and sustained HIs over a significant period of time and remain an underlying reason for many of the issues present today. The relational dynamics are organised along tribal and regional dimensions and relate heavily to identity, security, mistrust and inequality. It was broadly agreed that identity in Uganda lies with tribal identity. While the national Ugandan identity is present, it was either considered at par with, or substandard to, the tribal identity (interviews F 2019; G 2019; H 2019; C 2019; D 2019; J 2019; B 2019). Such dynamics has resulted in politics based on tribal loyalty and the impact of tribal politics was recognised as: “[e]very tribe wants

to rule, because when they rule, they are safe” (interview J 2019). Another organisation expressed the need for correcting tribal politics: “[t]he country has to go back to the drawing table and say ‘politics is different from development,’ [and] redesign the programs to benefit the entire society” (interview C 2019). Changing the salient and hostile group divisions, which have permeated several dimensions of the Ugandan society for many decades, is an intricate puzzle to solve.

As opposed to showing commitment to ending HIs and mending broken relationship, President Museveni has contributed to the reinforcement of tribal divisions. For example, the President has on national television expressed that he does *not* serve the country but is “working for himself and his family” (interview J 2019). Furthermore, he has declared that regions voting for the him will receive more benefits and greater access to services (interview H 2019). In countries with HIs, politics are often, as in the case of Uganda, organised along group identity (Stewart 2000: 257). Therefore, such statements, and particularly when enforced, are likely to result in even greater HIs as those most prone to vote for the President belong to the same tribe as him. It is precisely for such reasons that statebuilding and demands of multi-party democracy, without addressing the tendencies that such parties reflect and represent different tribal group, does little to improve on existing HIs.

Transforming and mending broken relationships has been significantly prioritised among particularly NGOs. With a focus on intra-communal mediation and conflict resolution, the NGOs have engaged heavily in correcting and improving the structures of mistrust and insecurity, *on communal level*, that resulted from the conflict. Theatre groups were used to produce an understanding and acknowledgment for the experiences of others affected by the conflict, including victims, perpetrators and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Recognising the ‘other side’, Lederach argues, is crucial for rebuilding dynamics and relationships, to ensure that reconciliation can take place and the cycle of violence and hate can end (Lederach 1997: 26). Considering the context of the Northern conflict, with the LRA being Acholi and attacking primarily Acholis, this was an important initiative. However, the conflict was not only an intra-communal conflict but was a civil war built on decades of mistrust and hostility on cross-regional and cross-tribal dimensions. Therefore, intra-communal mediation and dialogue is potentially insufficient to adequately address the underlying relational structures which are found, not on communal level, but on a national level between tribal groups.

There is a perception among the organisations that there is a growing frustration among the northern population and Acholis, suggesting a deterioration in terms of relational dynamics. The reinforcement of poor relations and frustration derives from the feeling of being neglected

and abandoned by the state. Part of the frustration is stemming from the conflict itself, mainly from the abducted youth taken by the rebels, which is often attributed to the unwillingness of the government to interfere in the conflict and, thus, allowed the continuation of the abductions (interview B 2019). Secondly, frustration derives from the government's current neglect of the north and its unwillingness to commit to the development and peacebuilding process (interviews F 2019; H 2019; J 2019; K 2019; A 2019; D 2019). The inequalities between the regions of Uganda, as the south and south-west reap the benefits of the President's favouritism, reinforces an 'us versus them' mentality in which hostile group identity thrives.

In the Ghanaian case, numerous initiatives to develop the north and continuous efforts to acknowledge and celebrate group identities, while simultaneously promoting national unity, have contained subjective HIs, which could otherwise have become a mobilising force (Langer 2009). In contrast, as suggested by civil society in Uganda, there is an unwillingness within the top-level leadership to commit to unifying Uganda and ending inequality between tribes and regions. Instead it reinforces the tribal divisions and contributes to an ongoing process of aggravating relationships between parties with a history of violent response to political exclusion and grave discrimination.

When the state is unwilling to commit to the reduction of HIs, Stewart, Brown and Langer (2007: 20), suggest that civil society and international aid can supply financial support and initiatives earmarked for the deprived region(s), with a particular focus on service provision such as, health and education. Based on the interviews, this is currently what civil society in Uganda engages in. Furthermore, one organisation, with a focus on reconciliation, provided medical treatment from one central hospital in the Acholi sub-region to ensure that people from all tribes would meet and be treated side-by-side (interview D 2019). Two other organisations engaged in inter-tribal dialogue with youths aimed at creating a sense of equality and acceptance across tribes (interviews D 2019; H 2019). However, such programs remain largely sub-regional.

On a number of occasions it was said that those contributing the most to reducing hostile attitudes and stereotypes towards different tribal groups were those that since the conflict ended, had relocated to other regions (interviews C 2019; I 2019). Migration was said to contribute to diminishing old stereotypes of Acholis as aggressive, and second-class citizens not made for political or official work. This reinforces the important aspect of 'encounters' to reconcile and transform hostile relations and structures (Lederach 1997: 26). This could also suggest that the 'integrationist' approach discussed previously, in terms of peacebuilding and HIs, could prove important to the peacebuilding process in Uganda.

However, broken relationships and the threat of conflict erupting is likely to remain as long as the state continues to create and reinforce inter-group hostilities. As long as the perception is that the government is neglecting the north, there is a continuous threat that frustration and subjective HIs could become a mobilising factor in Uganda. Because many of the potential sources for instability are grounded in political exclusion and neglect by the government, it is possible that the power to put an end to these instabilities are in the hands of those in political power. The severity of the poor relational structures and the frustration was clearly demonstrated by four organisations referring to the Ugandan situation as a ‘time-bomb’ (interviews K 2019; J 2019; F 2019; D 2019), with it only being a matter of time before large-scale violence returns. This is a testament to how crucial it is to address the HIs during the peacebuilding process.

Tracks of Peacebuilding

There is a strong inter-connection between the relational structures in Uganda and the efforts towards peacebuilding and HIs among the actors involved. The approaches of the three Tracks of peacebuilding actors in Uganda are seemingly in accordance with the CT theory; Track I engaged in the initial conflict resolution stage, Track II has taken on a monitoring and observational role, as well as, addressing immediate issues visible in the society, and Track III has had a prominent focus on providing service delivery and addressing the basic needs of the affected population. However, throughout the analysis, it is apparent that that the influence and impact that the various actors have on the peacebuilding process is not aligned with the suggestions proposed by Lederach, and a number of issues have become apparent in relation to current peacebuilding approaches and HIs in Uganda.

Track I actors are said to represent a small part of the population compared to Track II and III (Lederach 1997: 38). It is suggested that the decisions on grassroots level have greater impact on the day-to-day lives of the masses compared to that of top-level leadership decisions (Ibid.: 43). That said, it is recognised that the higher the level, the greater capacity to affect the entire population (Ibid.). Despite this, approaches by Track I actors are largely limited to the initial stages of the peacebuilding process, thus, overlooking its potential impact as the peace process continues. As previously stated, it is suggested that the political dimension, centralised within the state, holds significant power over both the economic and social dimensions of HIs (Stewart 2000: 248). In the Ugandan context, the power of the political level to increase and deepen tribal and regional inequalities is apparent. As such, by reducing the impact and approaches to the initial peace settlements, Lederach (1997) greatly undermines the potential

in aiding, but potentially even worse, underestimates how the top-level leadership can obstruct the peacebuilding process.

Currently, research on peacebuilding approaches aimed at addressing HIs generally presumes the cooperation and commitment of the top-level leadership to introduce policies and take initiatives aimed at reducing HIs and addressing the grievances of the unprivileged group(s). This is centred around the direct, indirect and integrationist initiatives highlighted by Stewart, Brown and Langer (2007). However, beyond briefly stating that civil society and international aid can allocate resources and efforts into the disadvantaged areas, the study depends on the cooperation of the state. This is greatly problematic as demonstrated in the case of Uganda.

Throughout the interviews, the unwillingness of the government to commit to the development and peacebuilding process in Northern Uganda was a reoccurring issue. The absence of a TJ policy was only one example of this, and was accredited to the government protecting itself from being held accountable for the atrocities and human rights abuses it had conducted during the war (interviews B 2019; J 2019; K 2019). In terms of HIs, this is problematic as it feeds into the already existing hostile group divisions as the government once again displays a reluctance to counter to the northern population and its needs. Furthermore, in relation to the Tracks, this is an example of the top-level leadership obstructing what is considered vital to the peacebuilding process according to civil society and the masses (based on information gathered by the interviewees).

As opposed to previous literature, which assumes the cooperation of the top-level leadership (Lederach 1997: 39, 45; Stewart, Brown and Langer 2007), the situation in Uganda thereby, demonstrates a completely different reality. The reluctance to create a TJ policy shows a government more eager to maintain its position in power than aiding the peacebuilding process by pursuing justice for its people. Furthermore, by refusing to implement a TJ policy, the government is increasing the rifts that already exist by fuelling the frustration and sense of abandonment that resides in the region towards the central state. Additionally, it is not only the government that enjoys impunity; on a local level perpetrators and victims are living side by side. Though civil society is engaging in communal reconciliation and conflict resolution, in the absence of legal procedures, justice may never truly be served. This poses a risk of never fully mending the broken relationships within communities, nor allowing inter-communal hostilities to be addressed.

The unwillingness of Track I actors to commit to the peacebuilding process is, in the case of Uganda, explained through political HIs. The mutually reinforcing nature of political

HIs and socioeconomic HIs – based on the reluctance to engage in peacebuilding efforts, was attributed to excluding politics: “[t]here is a lack of voice from people within the northern region. Because not so many of them qualify to be in the upper rounds, so they cannot come out and speak [...] when resources are being budgeted” (interview J 2019). The inaccessibility to the ‘upper rounds’ was in other words attributed to a lack of education and overall poor standard of life (interviews J 2019; K 2019; A 2019). It thereby, becomes clear that the lack of socioeconomic opportunities, such as education and income generating activities, results in low development in terms of human capacity compared to other regions. This, in turn makes accessing the political arena and decision-making processes difficult, which once again, reinforces the lack of development in the region as little resources are allocated to develop the region. The clear aspect of political HIs impacting on development strongly confirms the notion that the political dimension holds significant power over socioeconomic HIs (Hillesund 2019: 531) and whether they are exacerbated or reduced based on the political control over the distribution of resources. Furthermore, it suggests that in countries of severe imbalances in the political arena, Track I actors become even more influential and impactful during the peacebuilding process, compared to countries where politics do not hold the same power over the levels of socioeconomic standards.

As mentioned, in the rare cases in which alternative approaches to addressing HIs in peace processes are recognised, civil society and international aid is highlighted. In Uganda, civil society is to be, according to the interviewees, credited for the existing initiatives and results that have taken place. One organisation went so far as to claim that civil society has done “everything but collecting taxes” (interview G 2019). The same organisation expressed that: “NGOs have established and run health centres, supported the building of roads, nearly everything, they have tried to support communities in resolving land conflicts. The trouble is, for NGOs those are micro-initiatives – micro-initiatives are only effective when they are anchored from macro-initiatives” (Ibid.). Examples of the macro-initiatives they wished to see included the provision of a prosperous business environment, well-functioning public transport, electricity for industrial use, infrastructure and a road network. This, they suggested, was supposed to be provided by the government of Uganda, however, it was stated that they had instead engaged in micro-initiatives as a result of an unrefined action-plan (Ibid.).

Despite grand efforts by civil society, HIs, frustration and negative perceptions linger, and the threat of a new conflict prevails. This begs the question-- is it that civil society is incapable of addressing such a largescale issue as HIs in peacebuilding and are thus dependent on Track I actors to successfully reduce their prevalence and thwart the threat of conflict

erupting? Or, is it that current approaches to addressing peacebuilding generally neglect HIs, and thus provides civil society with insufficient and inefficient methods to addressing them? Based on this research, I argue that while Track I actors are immensely important, and depending on the context, may prove integral to reducing the likelihood of conflict based on HIs. However, it must also be recognised that the current lack of data results in an absence in knowledge which could produce alternative solutions that work around the current dependency on top-level leadership.

Two INGOs have announced projects aimed at mapping HIs in Uganda. Both the projects were in their initial stages and were aimed at identifying HIs in the region and the country (interviews G 2019; J 2019). Through such initiatives, the potential to discover alternative routes for addressing HIs could be found. The current absence of information mapping HIs supports the previous notion that civil society (and the entire peacebuilding process as a whole) is not supplied with knowledge and approaches aimed at addressing HIs. The lack of data is not an issue isolated to the case of Uganda, but is a considerable issue in peacebuilding (Stewart 2006: 7). Compared to VIs for which numerous indexes and measuring tools are available (Fragile States Index n.d.; ‘Human Development Index’ n.d.; The World Bank 2018; ‘Global Peace Index and Positive Peace’ n.d.), the glaringly clear lack of data on HIs speaks volumes about how much work there is to be done in this field. Thus, initiatives to map such inequalities could provide a clearer indication to where and what kind of HIs exist, which could in turn contribute to producing more effective initiatives aimed at addressing them. The current lack of information on how and where HIs are manifested in Uganda could explain the critique against the PRDP for being scanty, unfocused and failing to produce results. By mapping the HIs clearer, directives for the type of initiatives that need to be taken can be developed. Though this does not solve the issue of the unwillingness of the top-level leadership to commit to the reduction of HIs, it could provide civil society with much needed knowledge on how to improve their approaches to ensure that their work create a difference.

Conclusion

This research has shown that there is clear awareness among both NGOs and INGOs in terms of HIs impacting the Ugandan society and its violent history. However, the priority of addressing such issues during the peacebuilding process is much more complex than the recognition of their existence. In accordance with Lederach (1997), it was found that the local NGOs had a clear communal focus on their peacebuilding efforts. This included intra-communal conflict resolution and service provision aimed at attending to the immediate needs

of the affected population to minimise the grievances of the region. Although their initiatives were mainly concerned with consequences of the conflict, the grievances can quickly and easily be attributed to the discrimination and neglect of the northern region as a result of HIs. As such, the initiatives of the NGOs can be understood as minimising the existence of HIs. However, it was apparent that initiatives aimed at addressing such grievances were rarely attributed to HIs. In other words, *symptoms* such as, unemployment and the lack of access to services were greatly prioritised. However, the structural dimension that created the regional/tribal inequalities and grievances received limited attention beyond the recognition of their existence and problematic nature. This relatively narrow focus overlooking the underlying issues, despite being clearly aware of them, is argued to be attributed to the direct engagement with the affected population. This is thought that have resulted in a perspective and priorities closer to the everyday reality of the individual, as opposed to the overarching perspective on a structural level.

The international organisations had a strong emphasis on, and were constantly returning to, the issue of HIs. This is likely attributed to their mandate focused on monitoring and observing the situation in Uganda, providing them with a structural understanding of the circumstances, similar to that suggested by Lederach (1997). While not as given as for the NGOs, the INGOs did also engage directly with the affected population. Additionally, two international organisations had committed to investigating and mapping the nature of HIs in Uganda. Such initiatives have the potential to increase the recognition and attention of HIs in the peacebuilding process, an area which is currently severely understudied and under-recorded. The initiatives by the INGOs will hopefully supply the various peacebuilding actors with knowledge contributing to the development of approaches in terms of how to reduce their existence. As has been recognised in this thesis, ethnic conflicts and the prevalence of HIs are frequent features of contemporary violent conflicts, despite this, it was found that approaches to address such issues are very limited. Therefore, initiatives like those taken by the two INGOs are considered particularly important.

This research has found that the projects implemented by the civil society have addressed the direct needs of the people, by providing schooling, healthcare, psychosocial support, livelihood projects and so on. However, their current initiatives remain intra-communal, while the underlying structural issues of HIs are found on a cross-communal level. Based on the findings of this research, it is suggested that local initiatives, albeit vital to the peacebuilding process, currently lack the capacity to sufficiently address the deep-rooted HIs. Lederach points to Track II actors to influence the peacebuilding process, however, while possessing a greater insight into the structural dimension of the society, according to this

research, Track II actors are also hindered by Track I actors in their peacebuilding efforts to addressing HIs.

Beyond the own initiatives and projects implemented by civil society, it was clear that they were calling for greater responsibility and initiatives to be taken by the government in reducing regional disparities to contain the hostilities, bitterness and frustration created by HIs. The negative attitudes towards the government was connected to a sense of abandonment and neglect, which was said to be interlinked with HIs, the main root cause of the LRA war, as well as, a lingering and major issue during the peacebuilding process. It was suggested that peacebuilding initiatives by the top-level leadership in Uganda have been known for their lack of commitment, poor implementation and for being removed from the needs of the intended beneficiaries. This was at large attributed to broken tribal relationships resulting in the reluctance to prioritise the north. This was all said to reinforce ‘us versus them’ narratives by persistently differentiating between regions and tribes; significant issues which continue to create and reinforce major tensions in the country. In accordance with Lederach, it is, therefore, fair to assume that correcting and mending the broken relationships between tribes, on which the HIs and consequently hostilities are founded, is integral to the peacebuilding process.

This research argues that in the Ugandan case, there is a significant need for addressing the relational structures upon which the society is built. As previously argued, this is attributed to the fact that broken relationships, built on layers of mistrust and animosity resulting in patrimonial politics, are at the heart of HIs. Therefore, this study suggests that to reduce the likelihood of violent conflict returning, a transformation of the relational dynamics currently cultivating HIs, must be addressed during the peacebuilding process. However, presently, many peacebuilding efforts in Uganda, based on the empirical data, are not addressing or targeting the inter-communal issues where the basis for HIs are found. These findings have resulted in asking whether such tendencies are the result of a limited capacity of the civil society to engage in largescale inter-communal activities; or, whether the lacking access to both information and alternative approaches to addressing HIs in peacebuilding is at fault?

In accordance with Lederach (1997), this study concludes that local peacebuilding is essential to the peace process in Uganda. This is attributed to the major sources of frustration among the northern population as a result of the lack of local ownership and the detachment from the local realities of the population, which have characterised the top-down peacebuilding initiatives. In the absence of the civil society, the grievances of the northern population could be left unattended to, which could increase the likelihood of mobilisation and ultimately the reoccurrence of violent conflict. However, it has also been argued that the grassroots initiatives

on their own would prove insufficient to address the underlying structures preserving HIs. It has therefore, been suggested that the two different perspectives provided by the civil society can together enhance the peacebuilding process. The activities of the local organisations are of great importance to meet the immediate needs of the population. However, the nature of the conflict, built on HIs as a consequence of hostile and broken tribal relations, means that the deeper and structural focus provided by the INGOs is integral for addressing the underlying issues that have resulted in the grievances in northern Uganda. As such, the result of this study suggests that local peacebuilding, while in many ways crucial for peace, is not a clear-cut solution to the many complexities in Uganda.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that in societies such as, Uganda, with major imbalances in the political sphere, the top-level leadership holds significant control and power over the allocation of resources, and this in turn impacts the prevalence of socioeconomic HIs. Therefore, this research argues that Track I actors in societies with HIs, have considerable impact on the course of the peacebuilding process. This opposes what is suggested by previous research where its impact has primarily been limited to the initial peace efforts. The influence of Track I peacebuilding actors in the context of political HIs, has been exemplified by the central role held by the Ugandan government in reinforcing broken relationships and tribal inequalities. The poor relational structures in Uganda have been recognised as central to the existing disparities of the northern region as imbalances in political power controls much of the prevalence of socioeconomic HIs. This poses the question-- to what extent can the civil society in Uganda, assuming continued unwillingness of the government to commit to the peacebuilding process, mend inter-tribal relations and reduce HIs in their peacebuilding efforts?

Although it is recognised that the top-level leadership has significant impact on the peacebuilding process, this research also argues that it is highly problematic that previous research concerned with approaches towards reducing HIs in peacebuilding are almost exclusively limited to policy-making through Track I actors. This because it assumes that the people in power *want* to reduce HIs. However, in the context of Uganda, with a history where political change through violent coups has become normalised, and attaining political power is to ensure the security and prosperity of *one's own* tribal group, sharing political power is a foreign concept. Such tendencies, i.e. ruling for the benefit of a particular group, suggest that political HIs has major impact on the existence of socioeconomic HIs. As already argued, this leaves the political level with major impact on whether the HIs are addressed and reduced or reinforced and rising. As such, when approaches for addressing HIs in the peacebuilding process depend on power-sharing and cooperation, or at the very least, a government willing to

share its resources, their likelihood to reduce HIs are minimal. This links directly to the main pitfall of Lederach's theory, which greatly underestimates the role of Track I actors during the peacebuilding period. As opposed to the role assigned by Lederach, which is restricted to the conflict resolution stage, the case of Uganda suggests that Track I peacebuilding actors can have major influence on the peace efforts as they can either support or obstruct the efforts made on other levels. However, this does not entail that solutions to HIs should be directed to the top-level leadership alone. There is a potential danger in limiting the approaches to address HIs in peacebuilding to those depending on the willingness of the state. Instead, while recognising the significant role of Track I actors, greater attention ought to be given to alternative approaches to avoid countries from being paralysed by a reluctant state.

Having studied the role of HIs through the perspective of civil society, a number of gaps in the literature were recognised. As a relatively unexplored area of research, there is both a need and room for many studies to follow. One aspect is to engage more with the grassroots levels, with a particular focus on the affected population to explore subjective HIs in greater detail and a particularly interesting study would be to explore how they relate to objective HIs. This, to gain greater understanding for what perpetuates negative perceptions during peacebuilding, particularly in cases where it would be found that subjective HIs do not reflect the objective HIs.

Additionally, the lack of data on HIs is an issue much overdue to address. This is a gap not only in terms of individual studies, but it is an area of research which deserves attention from big indexes and data banks similar to those focusing on VIs such as, the Human Development Index, Global Peace Index and World Bank Data Bank. Without such measurements, HIs are immediately at risk of being overlooked in peace processes, which means that peacebuilding actors may be unaware of issues that are threatening peace, or how to address them. Conducting largescale data collection would give HIs greater recognition, which could in turn help tackle current tendencies to neglect and overlook them in peacebuilding. It could also provide practitioners and scholars with important data, and thus, allow them and enable them to develop tools for approaching the complexities of HIs.

The lack of research and data on HIs connects to a third area of interest for future research, that of expanding the approaches for addressing HIs beyond that of Track I initiatives. While recognising that Track I actors have major influence on the peacebuilding process, particularly when HIs are involved, the glaringly clear lack of alternative approaches leaves civil society with insufficient and ineffective tools and approaches to adequately address the complex issues of HIs. Finding alternative methods is crucial as, in the case of Uganda, HIs

have thoroughly manifested themselves in the relational structures upon which the society is built. By removing the dependency on the top-level leadership to commit and take action to reduce HIs, the possibility of solving the issues increases immensely.

On a final note, it is apparent that the civil society recognises the threat of HIs to the peace process in Uganda. However, beyond primarily observing the situation and addressing the communal grievances attributed at large to HIs, there are currently limited initiatives taken to address the deep-rooted structural issues upon which the inequalities are created. It has been argued, as opposed to previous research by the likes of Lederach (1997), that Track I peacebuilding actors have significant influence on the peacebuilding process, particularly in a society like Uganda, in which HIs are deeply engrained as a consequence of hostile tribal relations. Overall, this research strongly emphasises the necessity to address the current lack of data on HIs. This, to develop alternative approaches, beyond that of top-level leadership policy-making, to empower and supply civil society with adequate tools for addressing HIs in their peace efforts. Without such initiatives, the neglect of HIs in peacebuilding processes are likely to continue. Alternatively, civil society will remain largely stranded without appropriate tools for addressing such a significant and complex obstacle to sustainable peace. Considering the rapidly increasing trend of ethnic conflicts over the past half-century, this research therefore, strongly argues that the area of HIs in peacebuilding ought to receive significantly more attention.

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Appendixes

Interview guide

Introductions: My name, my studies and my research.

Anonymity

Their introduction: What kind of organisation? What is the aim of the organisation? Where do they work? Since when have they been active in the region?

Peace and Conflict

- According to you, has the Northern conflict ended?
 - o If yes, when and why?
 - o If no, why not?
- What are your expectations of peace? What is the vision?
 - o Is Uganda there?
- What do you think were the root causes of the Northern conflict?
 - o Are these issues still present today?
 - If yes, which ones and why do you think that is?

- If no, how and when were they solved?
 - Are there issues that have become increasingly important to address overtime that were less prioritised before?
- What do you consider the most important issues to address in the peacebuilding process?
- What role do you believe you (the organisation) play in maintaining/ensuring peace?
- Is there anything you believe is essential, to either maintain or change, for Uganda to avoid another conflict?

Inequality

- What forms of inequality do you believe exists in Uganda?
 - Where is it found?
 - In what way is it unequal?
 - Between who does the inequality exist?
 - How is it experienced?
- What are the main obstacles to equality in Uganda?
- Is your organisation addressing issues of inequality?
 - How?
- Do you believe that inequality had any role to play in the conflict?
 - If yes, in what way?
- Do you believe the perception of inequality reflects any actual inequality?
- Is inequality experienced similarly all over Uganda, for everyone? Are there differences in inequality in different parts of Uganda?
- What is your opinion on if/how civil society/NGOs should work with inequality?
- What is your opinion on how Ugandan politics are addressing inequality?
- Any directives, policies or guidelines by the government that you must follow in terms of working with inequality?
 - That you find good? That you find limiting?
- What is your perception of how the government addresses inequality?
 - Do you think it is sufficient – rate their efforts from 1-10? Would you like to see them doing things differently? How?

Development

- What is development to you?
- What is your perception of development in Uganda since the conflict?
 - Have there been enough initiatives and positive results?
 - How have initiatives and results been divided? Equally nationwide? Regional differences?
- Does your organisation prioritise development in its work?
 - If so, are there any particular aspects/issues that you pay extra attention to?
- What is your perception of how the Ugandan government has addressed development?
 - Any differences from during the conflict period and since it ended?
- Any directives, policies or guidelines by the government that you must follow in terms of working with development?
- What is your perception of how the government addresses development?
 - Do you think it is sufficient, rate 1-10? Is there anything you would like them to do differently? More or less of?

National unity and ethnic divisions

- Based on your experience, has the notion of being ‘Ugandan’ changed between when the conflict was ongoing and today?
 - o Who does it include?
- Are there any differences in attitudes towards/between different tribes/ethnic groups that you have observed between the conflict period and today?
- How do you perceive that the rest of Uganda view the Northern region and, particularly, Acholis now compared to before?
 - o (Still in connection with the LRA?)

General

- Have the main issues and projects by your organisation changed or remained the same over the course of being active in the region? Why/why not? How?
- What do you believe are the main concerns that remain to be dealt with in Uganda?
- What do you believe are the main concerns that remain to be dealt with in the Northern region in particular?

End note: Are there any questions, concerns or clarifications you would like to offer before we end the interview?