“The Land Grows People”:
Indigenous Knowledge and Social Repairing in Rural Post-Conflict Northern Uganda

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how individuals and communities “move on” after two decades of war and mass internal displacement in rural Acoliland, Northern Uganda (~1986-2008). Based upon fieldwork from 2004 to 2012, it explores the multi-generational angst regarding youth’s disconnection from, or disinterest in, tekwaro (Acoli indigenous knowledge) in the conflict and post-conflict years. Attending to the ways that everyday inter-generational practices engendered by a return to the land activate a range of social relationships and engagements with tekwaro, I assert that these interactions re-gather different generations in the rebuilding of social, political, and moral community.

I first re-narrate the history of one rural sub-clan, and explore how ngom kwaro (ancestral land) is their prime idiom of relatedness. Detailing experiences of displacement during the recent war, I acknowledge the tic Acoli (livelihood work) necessary for survival upon their return to the land as a vital framework for inter-generational engagement. I then consider adults’ and elders’ preoccupation with the decline of woro (respect) and cuna (‘courtship’ processes) within the IDP (internally displaced persons’) camps. Exploring how cuna affects relations and their organization, I examine contemporary cuna processes as important frameworks for inter-generational interaction. I finally consider how the responsibilities and relationships activated through kin-based communal governance organizations (sub-clans, lineages) are key to understanding both tekwaro and relatedness, and examine the creation of one sub-clan’s written constitution as another significant framework for inter-generational negotiation, participation, and engagement.
I emphasize that these engagements with tekwaro work to elaborate and re-elaborate relatedness, and thus serve as important practices of social repairing, grounded by communal stewardship of the land. Rather than addressing specific transgressive violences experienced during the war years, the results of this research suggest that social repair—the striving for the restoration of sociality—implicitly concerns resistance of the seeping, inscribing, relational effects of those violences. Rather, a return to the land, and the system of land tenure itself, provokes inter-generational participation that serves to make and remake relatedness, orienting social relations away from the fragmenting, unprecedented, Acoli-on Acoli violence (Oloya 2013) experienced during the years of war and displacement.
Preface

I received ethical approval for this study through The University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board (H11-03483, approved January 30, 2012) and through the Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology’s (UNCST) review processes (permit no: SS2747 and Ugandan President’s letter no: ADM 154/212/01, approved March 12, 2012).

Though this dissertation could not have been written without much assistance, this dissertation is an original intellectual product of the author, Lara Rosenoff Gauvin. I acknowledge the hard work of my research assistant Nyero Augustine Caesar, as well as Oyil Francis Abonga, with transcribing some of the data from audio to written form. Translation of speech and text from Acoli Luo to English was mostly done by myself, the author, in consultation with the above named assistance. The workbook ‘Tekwaro Pabwoc’ that is included as Appendix A is the result of collaborative work between myself, Nyero Augustine Caesar, Binayo Okongo, and other elders of Pabwoc. I have their permissions to reproduce the workbook here.

All figures, except the following, are by the author:


-Figure 20, by Oguti Yolanda. Reproduced here with permission.

-Figures 11, 18, 24, 26, 31, and 32, by Ryan Gauvin. Reproduced here with permission.
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## Glossary

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<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>cuna</em></td>
<td>courtship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gang</em></td>
<td>home, village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kaka</em></td>
<td>chiefdom, clan, sub-clan, or lineage structures. Refers to a kin-based heterarchical affiliation. Used interchangeably by residents of the Padibe sub-counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kit me kwo</em></td>
<td>ways of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ngom kwaro</em></td>
<td>ancestral lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ribbe kaka</em></td>
<td>clan, sub-clan, lineage unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tekwaro</em></td>
<td>indigenous knowledge. Usually translated by others as culture, history, tradition, or oral tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tic</em></td>
<td>work (tasks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>wang oo</em></td>
<td>literally, the fireside, fireside chats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>woro</em></td>
<td>respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Dedication

To Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya.
Chapter 1: Introduction—What Makes Home Alive Again?

This thesis is about how communities “move on”, rebuild, restore relations, and perform social repair after war and mass displacement in the rural Padibe sub-counties, Northern Uganda. I explore here how a return to the land, and the system of customary land tenure, provokes kin-based inter-generational interactions that serve to engage multiple generations in the negotiation, elaboration, and learning of tekwaro, Acoli indigenous knowledge.¹ I understand these engagements with tekwaro as processes that serve to make and remake relatedness, both historically, and in the contemporary context. Re-elaborating relatedness itself is understood as social repairing, and thus concerns the refusal of the war-violence’s power and capacity to fragment social relations.

1.1 Photo Series Excerpt—“Ngom Pito Dano”/“The Land Grows People”

The following photographs are excerpts from a series of “self-portraits” co-created with residents of Pabwoc (and some from Padibe). They are included here to both introduce the work, and some of my main interlocutors, and to represent how community members wanted to “picture” themselves in their own photo albums, and on their own walls.

¹ Although the Acoli word tekwaro is generally translated as “culture”, the word itself has a large semantic range (not unlike in English)—it literally means “under the ancestors”, and the Acoli concept itself often includes history and tradition as well. I use the term “indigenous knowledge” in places throughout the dissertation to more accurately represent the Acoli concept in English. A more complete conception of tekwaro, and a theoretical exploration of its translation as indigenous knowledge is explored in section 1.4.
Figure 1- Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya. Pabwoc, 2012.
Figure 2- Ataro Santina. Pabwoc, 2012.
Figure 3- Alal Rose. Pabwoc, 2012.
Figure 4- Aceng Beatrice, Kilama Amos, and Vita Kisumu. Lotibol, 2012.
Figure 5- Oguti Yolanda. Pabwoe, 2012.
Figure 6- Anjello Ludega and Cecerina Ludega. Laguri, 2012.
Figure 7- Aparo Beatrice. Pabwoc, 2012.
1.2 The Seeds of Social Repair

I returned to Pabwoc in April of 2015. It was my first visit since my main period of fieldwork for this project in 2012, two and half years earlier. A lot had happened in those years. In Canada, my husband, Ryan and I had a son, Ambrose, and I was writing the chapters you are reading now. In Pabwoc, my host family (Omono Justo Langoya, his wife Acan Almarina, their children, and Omono’s two sisters Ataro Santina and Rose Alal) had changed too. They had fresh-built grass thatched-roof houses in their homestead, a new granary, more livestock, and first babies were born to Augustine (my host family’s eldest son and research assistant) and his wife, Ojara (my host family’s second eldest son) and his wife, and to Docus, my host Auntie Santina’s daughter.

Time had passed. It was now six years since my host family left Padibe Internally Displaced Persons’ (IDP) camp to which they were forced to flee during the war between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and President Museveni’s Government and military (UPDF).

During the war, they–like 100% of the rural population in Acoliland–were pressured by LRA and UPDF violence to abandon their homes. Camp life was not like home, and home (gang) had turned into something else.

Home is dead and its dead are silent. We are in the camp.

Home is dead. Who do you find in it?

Acoliland is dead silent. Home is dead.
Our large homestead has turned into bush.
The large grazing land has turned into bush.
Home is dead.

-Excerpt from a song by Murugut, local songwriter from Patongo, Pader District.²

The LRA-Government war is particularly rooted in events that occurred in 1986 in Uganda, when President Museveni and his National Resistance Army (NRA) finally seized power from Tito Okello after a five-year guerilla war.³ Acoli men who had served in the Acoli-dominated United National Liberation Army (UNLA) army under defeated Milton Obote, and then Tito Okello, fled north to their homeland to escape NRA retribution (Branch 2011). This indeed came in the form of a military campaign by Museveni’s newly named National Resistance Movement (NRM) against “opposition” in the north. Defeated soldiers took to the bush to form a new rebel group, the Ugandan People’s Defence Army (UPDA). By 1988 however, an agreement signed between the NRA and the UPDA led to the demobilization and return of some UPDA, but others retreated further into the bush to regroup (Baines 2015a). Some joined Alice Lakwena, who fought what has been called a “Holy War” against the NRA, reaching Jinja District before defeat (Behrend 1999). Some former Acoli troops then reorganized, under the leadership of Joseph Kony, becoming the

² As part of this study, Francis Oyil collected and translated local songs composed about war and camp life throughout Northern Uganda.
³ However, the roots of the war is often attributed to the British Colonial administration of Uganda, and its enduring legacy of divisive ethnic politics manifest in successively violent post-colonial government changes (Baines 2015a, Branch 2011, Finnström 2008). Chapter 3 contains a more in-depth discussion of Colonial intervention in Uganda, specifically in the Padibe sub-counties.
The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999, Van Acker 2004). The LRA soon found fertile bases for themselves in Southern Sudan, which had been plagued by war since 1983, when the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) began fighting the Khartoum government. The Sudanese government in Khartoum allied with the LRA, as the Government of Uganda openly supported the SPLA (Apuuli 2011).

The LRA-Government war has been characterized by many people I met in Acoliland as “squeezing civilians” from both sides. Children and youth were targeted by the LRA and forced to porter, work, fight, abduct, kill, or harm civilians (Baines 2015a). LRA attacks and raids on homesteads were frequent, as punishment or warning to civilians who were seen as “collaborating” with Government (see for examples, Amony 2015, JRP 2012).

On the other side, by the height of the conflict (2003–2005), as many as 1.3 million Acoli were forcibly relocated by Government to IDP camps and were unable to access their residential and agricultural lands (Bøas and Hatløy 2005). As will be further explored in Chapters 3 and 4, massive international non-governmental organizations (NGO) interventions tried, yet failed, to respond to the burgeoning needs of the displaced population; including food, water, medical services, and sanitation facilities (Branch 2011, Dolan 2009).

Since my host family was first displaced from their land in 1997 as a result of nearby LRA massacres, their livestock has been raided by Government soldiers, the immediate family narrowly escaped from LRA attacks several times, their fruit orchards were burned (people

———

I discuss more fully the reasons and details of this displacement in Chapter 3.
are unsure of who actually did the burning), their sister was killed in an LRA attack, extended family members were abducted by the LRA, and they experienced years of extreme poverty, hunger, and disease from Government’s policy of forced displacement to the so-called “protected villages” (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010, Dolan 2009), in their case, to Padibe IDP camp.

Figure 8- The Republic of Uganda.

Showing the location of Pabwoc, in the Padibe East and West sub-counties, Lamwo District, Uganda.
When I first visited Northern Uganda in 2004 (as a photographer), close to the height of the war, 100% of the rural population in Acoliland was displaced to IDP camps like Padibe, where overcrowding, lack of sanitation facilities, and inadequate foodstuff led to emergency level excess mortality rates, over 1000 deaths per week (UMH 2005). While Government maintains that the IDP camps were there to protect the population from LRA attacks, many scholars hold Government responsible for the high death rates and inhuman living conditions, and call the camp conditions genocide (Otunnu 2006, Obote 1990, Whitmore 2010), a form of social torture (Dolan 2009), and a violation of international humanitarian law (Okello and Hovil 2007:437).

I first met my host family on my third visit to the area, amidst these conditions, in Padibe IDP camp in late 2006 (as a photographer/researcher). Huts were built so close together that their thatched roofs touched and you could barely squeeze between them. Despite the ceasefire announced two months before, the family was still unable to access their gardens for fear of persistent LRA violence and Government’s military (UPDF) intimidation, and they were almost entirely dependent on World Food Program (WFP) aid for subsistence. Poverty was visually striking in the camp, and the smell of underserviced and overcrowded

5 There was also discussion amongst academics of the international community’s complicity in the terrible conditions that caused egregious harm (Branch 2008, 2011, Dolan 2009).
6 I have been visiting Acoliland since 2004 and have spent a cumulative period of 14 months in the area. I will details these visits, as well as the circumstances of these visits, in Chapter 2. Please see the timeline graphic, Appendix C, for quick consultation.
conditions belied the high rates of cholera, typhoid, and respiratory illnesses (UMH 2005, ARLPI 2001).7

**Figure 9- Aceng Beatrice in front of her hut in Padibe IDP Camp, 2006.**

A fire earlier in the year had torn through the camp, burning most residents’ possessions and their straw-thatched roofs.

In comparison to the abductions and extreme brutalities inflicted by the LRA, including massacres, forced killing, beatings, the looting of foodstuff, and the night commuting phenomena,8 the plight of the internally displaced population during and after the war has been given less attention and consideration (Porter 2013:20). However, the years of forced displacement had profound consequences on Acoli society.

______________________________

7 A more detailed account of the family’s experiences during wartime is recounted in Chapter 3.  
8 “Night commuters” was the term given to tens of thousands of children who commuted to town centers from peri-urban areas for nightly protection from LRA brutalities. The LRA would often attack (and abduct) at nighttime.
I am concerned here with these consequences, and in learning how war-affected individuals and communities in rural Acoliland conceptualize and address these transformations to “move on” with their lives after their experiences in the IDP camps. How they return to a “dead home” and make it living again. To do so, I situated myself within one rural village (Pabwoc), in Padibe West sub-county, Lamwo District, Uganda.⁹

**Figure 10- Padibe East and West Sub-counties, Lamwo District, Republic of Uganda.**

Showing the locations of Pabwoc, and Padibe Town Council (also referred to as 'the center', the former Padibe IDP camp, and Padibe trading center).

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⁹ Lamwo district was created in 2009, and was part of Kitgum District during the war years. The district itself borders South Sudan, has a population of 170,033, and a low population density of 30 people per km² (Human Rights Focus 2013).
I learn about survivors’ “assumptions” regarding social relations (Strathern 1992:3), and explore how Acoli people believe the war and displacement affected these relations. Because of residents’ emphasis on the war and displacement’s impact on tekwaro, I specifically dwelled on contemporary moments, events, and practices that re-activate inter-generational engagement with tekwaro, generating participation in the creation and recreation of people’s own social, political, and moral communities, their kaka, or after Oloya, their kin-based communal governance organizations (lineages, clans, chiefdoms)\(^\text{10}\) (Oloya 2015:02). I have learned that these practices are engendered by a return to the land, and to the customary system of land tenure that itself provokes and hosts these interactions. I have come to appreciate these practices as important sites of social repairing in rural contexts because of how they re-orient social relations away from the fragmenting effects of the war violence experienced.

In considering what “social repair” means, I was having a conversation with Omono Justo Langoya (the father of my host family, hereafter Baba) about seeds on my recent visit in 2015. My husband wanted me to ask for some of Acan Almarina’s (the mother of our host

\(^{10}\) I translate kaka terms that account for relationship in kin-based communal governance organizations today in Padibe, rather than common anthropological models that hold that a clan is an association of agnates that may not have common descent, while lineages all have common descent. Using the recounting of Pabwoc’s history, I call their apical ancestor group the clan, which includes non-genealogically linked sons. I call all those sons’ groups (genealogic and through allying and adoption) of the apical ancestor, the sub-clans. I further call the sub-clan’s sons’ groups (all genealogically linked) lineages. Descending from the apical ancestor then, is clan, sub-clan, and lineage. A larger group that includes clans is further called a chiefdom. These English terms are, as seen, not the best suited to descriptions that are fluid over time. Kaka fits better as a description for all these kin-groups that connotes heterarchical alliance and relationship. Residents often use “clan” in English to denote these various levels of kin-based communal governance, and I retain their references in the quotations.
family, hereafter Mama) millet—wondering if her heirloom seeds would grow in Canada. I talked with Baba about “heirloom” seeds, what that meant, and then I wondered about seeds after the IDP camps. Mama grew most of the family’s foodstuff (about 90%), and it takes quite a lot of seed to reap a good harvest. It also took quite a few planting seasons to procure enough to feed the whole family. I knew that some NGOs gave people seeds to help them return to their land and their subsistence farming way of life upon leaving the IDP camps, but I wondered if individuals and families were able to conserve any of their own “heirloom” seeds from before the war and forced displacement.

Baba answered in a way that I have not forgotten. In the dark warm house, his face lit by a battery-powered lantern, he said:

You see, here in Acoli, even if a house is completely destroyed, and you cannot see any ruins of the house even, beneath where the old house stood you will find enough seeds to start planting again. Even if the bush has grown over it, you must remember where it was and dig down, especially under the kitchen house of course, and there the seeds will be. You see, some fall while grinding, and also the ants, they are very important, they take the seeds, and store them underground in the land.

This dissertation explores processes of social repair, looking to how everyday practices of quotidian labour, survival from the land, and the organization of social relations mix into each other in the ways that people rebuild and re-create life and living after upheaval—where the seeds of social repair are found and the ways in which they are used to make
home living again. According to Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, social repair is “the set of actions and processes that individuals mobilize to reconstruct social relations, negotiate strategies for coping with violence, and to get on with daily life” (2015:284). I learned that the practices and actors that actually work to repair social relations in rural Padibe are deeply embedded in processes that are aimed at successful subsistence, and living “in community” on the land in the present and future, but less concerned with addressing specific conflict or displacement breaches and violences from the past. I take relationships, and thus the ways in which people understand and articulate how they are related, as a main analytic tool in this study to understand social repair. Relatedness, specifically Janet Carsten’s notion of indigenous idioms of relatedness (1995, 1997, 2000), allows for the centering of relations between people living, past and future, and between people and their physical environment, including ants, humans, and seeds. Understanding that the land itself is the main symbol of relatedness—of kinship, or how people are related and what being related does—in rural Acoli becomes my frame for attending to the practices which individuals and communities engage in as they “move on” after war and upheaval, how they practice and re-elaborate that relatedness, and how that relatedness works as social repair.

My interest in social repair in Acoliland first emerged in tandem with the displaced community’s own concerns. On my fifth visit to Northern Uganda in 2008 (as a photographer-researcher), I was staying next door to my host family in Padibe IDP camp.

At that time, the ceasefire of the previous year and a half had changed things considerably. People all over Acoliland had begun to return to their villages after a decade or more of forced displacement into squalid camps. Like much of the rural population who had been forcibly displaced, my host family was planning to return to their ngom kwaro (ancestral land) at the end of the year. Bush was finally being cleared, seed was being sown, boreholes were being checked, and houses were being built.

At the same time, however, Acoli men, women, children, and youth struggled to deal with the past two decades of war, abduction, suffering, poverty, and internal displacement. Children and youth who grew up dependent on humanitarian aid in the congested camp were being reintroduced to “normal” village life primarily based on subsistence agriculture. Youth who were able to escape from the LRA continued to struggle to reintegrate into their families and villages, or adapt to town life. Kin organizations (lineages, sub-clans, clans, chiefdoms) tried to cope with the effects of the decades of violence, internment, and destitution as re-settlement began and land conflicts were common (Atkinson and Hopwood 2013, Whyte et al. 2012). Food was not yet plentiful. Thousands of people, mostly youth, were still missing with their whereabouts unknown. Thousands of deaths had not been properly mourned.

12 Other peoples were also affected by the war, namely the Lango and Iteso in Uganda (and communities in DRC, South Sudan and CAR), but I keep my references here to Acoli individuals and communities in rural Acoliland, Northern Uganda.

13 A report released by CAP (2012) estimated that there were still 1036 children or youth missing from Gulu District alone.
While relieved from the threat of armed violence, and the confinement, hunger, and disease of the IDP camps, many of the rural youth I spoke with expressed anxiety about their disconnection from tekwaro Acoli, what I will translate here as Acoli indigenous knowledge, but what is generally translated as culture, history, or tradition. They admitted that they did not know, and in many cases, did not want to know, Acoli *kit me kwo* (ways of life) after life in the displacement camps. Their general angst was shared by many of the adults and elders who feared that youth who had grown up only in the IDP camps didn’t know, or were “out of” tekwaro. Some said that the youth were *labongo ngeno tekwaro* (lit. without trust in indigenous knowledge, or the ancestors). Enoji Onguti, a blind elder I spoke with that July, the oldest man in the Padibe sub-counties, told me that tekwaro, Acoli indigenous knowledge, was not “destroyed” or “made to get lost” by the war and camps, as many have asserted, but that it is just that the youth, and many others, are not “within it” anymore. Luckily, he added with a smile, they can come back within it anytime. When questioned by a curious and stubborn anthropologist (myself), others expressed that although the problem is expressed as lying with youth, youth’s estrangement from tekwaro actually belies adults’ and elders’ disengagement from tekwaro as well, because, as Rwot Madi explained to me while visiting a neighbouring village, “it is up to adults and elders to teach the youth. When people talk about youth being out of tekwaro, it is not really the failure of the youth, but of the adults and elders.” A 16 year-old girl, Apiyo, who was visiting with us, also added, that “it is very difficult (*to learn tekwaro*), because the youth of today don’t have anyone to guide them.” A mother of seven likewise expressed to me that people should not blame the war for the problems with youth, that blaming does nothing, that it is
really up to the elders to start teaching again. Even youth and young adults reflected on this, as did Oyil, a 35 year old father of three, one evening around the fire: “war has really eroded tekwaro because we do not have elders around. Even me, I cannot tell about tekwaro. Because I was too young in the war. All of us should be blamed.”

It was intriguing that rural elders, adults, and youth repeatedly used the concept of youth’s disconnection from, or ignorance of, or disinterest in and refusal of tekwaro, Acoli indigenous knowledge, to communicate their immediate post-conflict reconstruction and/or reconciliation concerns. These expressions were particularly different from fierce debate in policy, academia, and urban Ugandan civil society regarding the capacity and possibility of extending national amnesty laws and using “traditional” Acoli justice mechanisms in addressing violent crimes from the war (Allen 2007, Armstrong 2014, Baines 2007, Finnström 2010, JRP 2005, Komakech 2012). 14 Yet, as corroborated by other scholars working in Acoliland, high levels of inter-generational angst regarding tekwaro monopolized popular discourse at that time.

Kristen Cheney in her Northern Ugandan chapter about Ugandan children, speaks about how the circumstances of war and displacement have completely overturned the inter-generational social structure of the Acoli, and noted that elders, parents and counselors alike complained that the war was destroying Acoli culture (Cheney 2007:200). “Whether

14 The issuing of five arrest warrants to the LRA’s top commanders (including Kony) by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2005, and its implications to the viability of the Juba Peace Process which began in 2006, provoked much of this debate (see Apuuli 2004, 2006, 2008).
or not people who lament this loss of tradition and family are idealizing the past, their assertion of loss indicates a deep cultural anxiety over the fate of inter-generational relationships” (201). Opiyo Oloya, a scholar, educator and journalist, writes in an article for a Ugandan national newspaper of the loss of Acoli education from the circumstances of war, leading him to declare that one of the biggest tragedies from the war was “the death of culture” (2002). The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative likewise spoke of a “collapse of cultural and moral values” (ARLPI 2001:17). Chris Dolan (2009), in his investigation of the displacement camps as a form of social torture by Government, explores what he calls “cultural debilitation”, which refers to how people living in IDP camps within the war zone experienced overcrowded living conditions as “vectors not just for bacteria and viruses, but insofar as they resulted in various practices which would not have been tolerated under other circumstances, as vectors for social breakdown and moral disintegration” (169).

Sverker Finnström, in his work on Acoli cosmology in wartime, notes that “young men and women complained that there is no guidance from more senior people, while older men and women saw few possibilities to guard and guide the youth. Thus traditional values, cultural knowledge, and social institutions of everyday life are threatened” (Finnström 2008:146).

There is some relevant insight from further afield on what is now known as the African continent that explores the effects of war and displacement on both indigenous knowledge, broadly conceived, and inter-generational relations. Alice Honwana (2005), for example, describes how the wars in Mozambique and Angola created what she calls a “crisis in moral
values”, linked to a breakdown in the institutional initiation of youth into adulthood, that resulted in what some locals express as a “retardation” in the maturation process. Studying “child soldiers” in varied contexts, she sees the dramatic shift of social roles and responsibilities of children in war intrinsically linked to, as she describes it, a “breakdown of societal structures and long-standing moral matrices in contexts of extreme social crisis” (2005:37-8). Hirut Tefferi, a scholar and practitioner who specifically focuses on displacement of children and youth in East Africa, similarly emphasizes that the social roles and responsibilities that are distributed in relation to age and generation have been particularly undermined by large-scale displacement from protracted conflict whereby conventional frameworks for adolescents to transition to adulthood are disrupted (2008).

In ideal circumstances, attachment to community is developed through processes of socialization and initiation that involve the inculcation of established values...in many conflict situations, however, the destruction of families, communities and traditional rituals often means that adolescents miss out on engagement with the established processes through which a sense of group belonging is developed. (Tefferi 2008:29-30)

These studies point to war and displacement’s breakdown of social structures of organization, and the intrinsic value systems and moral signposts, within which, and by which youth become socialized as participant members of a community. Speaking of war and displacement’s effects on values, morals, and social roles and institutions, all connected with inter-generational relations, begins to converge with rural Acoli communities’
preoccupation with youth being out of, or unwillingness to be in, *tekwaro*, both by circumstance and by continued choice.

Youth’s disengagement from *tekwaro*, as understood by my interlocutors, manifests itself in many practices and discourses, much of which will be explored in Chapters 2 through 5. However, I first encountered the phenomena when it was finally deemed safe enough (by camp residents) to leave the IDP camps starting in 2008. Many youth did not want to return to their family’s lands to farm. Although finding employment is exceedingly difficult in the Padibe sub-counties, they were not interested in spending their days toiling in the fields. Additionally, there was much discord created from the high levels of perpetually unsanctioned unions, and resulting children, that originated during the displacement years. As I will explore in Chapter 4, these significantly impacted women and children’s statuses, other male family members’ potential unions, as well as land access rights through the customary tenure system in place. There was also significant worry about youth not knowing their extended kin networks, their lineage and clan relations. Without growing up in villages where spatial dimensions mirrored kin relations (a village often corresponds to a sub-clan), there was a lack of the participatory responsibilities related to kin relationships that instill moral values and that reinforce kin authority and governance (regulated by the *kaka*, as explored in Chapter 5).

Exploring inter-generational relations of uneasiness, and understanding what people mean by *tekwaro*, indigenous knowledge, have been fundamental to my exploration of war and
displacement's impacts on rural Acoli society and subsequent understandings of community practices of social repair. Conceptualizing social repair as how individuals and communities “move on” after war and displacement and how they make home alive again, privileges relationships (as in social repair), and as I explore here, inter-generational as well as human-land ones as primary sites for this kind of work.

The next section explores what I mean by the term social repair, drawing upon contemporary studies of lives during and after war as well as important critiques of transitional justice practices. I explain that consideration of land tenure, and how the land is an idiom of relatedness itself, is an important contribution in understanding how individuals and communities in rural settings “move on” after war and displacement. The social repairing that occurs in Padibe thus suggests that it is important to reorient social repair to an alternate coordinate than the defining constraints of the touchstone of violent acts themselves. I then introduce the research project and my initial research questions. A full description and analysis of my research ethos, engagements, and methodologies will expand upon this brief overview in Chapter 2. I finally build up my theoretical framework, unpacking the concept of tekwaro to show how a return to the land, and the system of land tenure, engenders inter-generational participation in, and engagement with, tekwaro that re-elaborates relatedness, and how that constitutes vital social repair practices. The remainder of the introduction will detail the main contributions of each chapter.
1.3 Social Repair

Although most studies of lives during and after war emphasize the ways that people navigate experiences of violence that have become incorporated into relationships and the everyday, for rural Acoli in Padibe, repair itself consists of separating the violence “out” again; or re-orienting relationality itself to a different set of coordinates grounded in indigenous notions of relatedness. Social repair in rural Acoli is thus the refusal of the powerful categorizing and organizing capacities of violence. This refusal is practiced by re-elaborating kin-based non-violent frames of relationality, particularly those grounded by the land, and the customary system of land tenure. This section will first review existing literature on social repair, and then advance my own understandings of the concept based on the results of the current study.

An “anthropology of social repair” was only first identified as such by Rosalind Shaw in 2007. Emerging in response to the discipline’s increasing focus on instability, disintegration, and conflict, Shaw notes that recent works have shifted focus to explore processes and practices that remake (rather than undo) social worlds and sociality itself. For example, Carolyn Nordstrom who worked in Mozambique during the 1990s urged for an expanded conception of violence and analyses of war that encompassed reconstruction as well as destruction, and survival as well as suffering. Approached this way, violence could be better understood as a “dimension of living rather than as a domain of death” (Robbens and Nordstrom 1995:6). Through this lens, Nordstrom became alert to creativity
and imagination as important strategies of survival and reconstruction amid the people she encountered (1997). Along with Anthony Robben, she states:

In peeling back the layers of the many realities that impinge on this question of what violence is, we find that even the most horrific acts of aggression do not stand as isolated exemplars of a “thing” called violence but cast ripples that reconfigure lives in the most dramatic of ways, affecting constructs of identity in the present, the hopes and potentialities of the future, and even renditions of the past. (Robbens and Nordstrom 1995:5)

Shaw herself tackles the question of “the ways in which people in conditions of violence and political flux reweave their lives” (2007a:67) in post-war Sierra Leone, and locates the reconstructive processes within memory. This focus on memory, she states, allows for a consideration of how upheaval is realized as lived experience, and how suffering is transformed into enabling narrative. Her earlier work (2002), examines the manifestation of memories of the slave trade, colonialism, and the contemporary war in non-linear embodied practices.

Pilar Riaño-Alcalá also specifically attends to memory practices as forms of social repair. For her, memory is a “cultural practice, a form and system of action that relates to a domain of knowledge and a locus of experience” (2006:11) that negotiates the lived experience of violence. The various memory practices of youth in Medellin that she witnesses, including place-naming (81) and ghost narratives (123), suggests memory itself as an ongoing,
everyday, relational sociocultural process of reconciliation, or moving on. In her more recent work, she also explores how what she terms “grassroots” processes of social repair, particularly commemorative practices of a displaced Wayuu community in Colombia, call upon the memory of their peoples’ connections to the land, the supra natural world, and the dead, to demand justice after a massacre that killed members of their community (2015, N.d.).

Michael Jackson studies storytelling events during and after conflict, mostly in Sierra Leone, as particular mediators of social relations (2002, 2005), and emphasizes that the stories people tell about violence in their everyday lives gives great insight into how people make communal life viable in war as well as in peace. Erin Baines similarly examines life histories, of women abducted by the LRA in Northern Uganda, and posits that they are particularly effective in understanding how those affected by violence “persevere” (2015), and how that perseverance is itself a political act.

In addition to a focus on creativity, imagination, memory practices, and storytelling, studies of “social repair” generally remind us that lives in war should be engaged with as sites of social reproduction (Lubkemann 2008), and not merely as sites of interruption. In his study in Mozambique, Lubkemann concludes that rather than being overwhelmed with dealing with acute violence itself, people were actually engaged in re-negotiating social relations and key life projects (2008). Because contemporary warfare is often long-term or continuous, this “chronic crisis”, as Henrik Vigh describes it, demands that lives must be
approached as “a terrain of action and meaning rather than aberration” (Vigh 2008:6). The demand for acknowledgement of the agency of those whose lives have been entangled in political, systemic, and structural violence is thus a key consideration in the study of social repair.

There is also concern about the nature and social impact of violence itself. As Veena Das poetically points out—the event of violence “attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary” (2007:1). Particularly examining the violent events around India’s Partition and the 1984 riots, her work explores what it means to live together again, and what happens to the subject and the world when memories of violent events are incorporated into ongoing relationships. Attending to processes of social repair thus acknowledges that violence does not harm isolated individuals, but that it is inherently relational, as it becomes mixed into everyday life and relationships, affecting friendships, families, and communities (Theidon 2006). Any understandings of moving on, or “reconciliations”, must then also be understood relationally (Borneman 2002).

A significant interlocutor in questions concerning how people in Northern Uganda “move on” after the war and displacement (as well as in other parts of the world), has been the international legal practices and processes known as transitional justice. A definition of transitional justice includes:

The full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. These may include both judicial and non-judicial
mechanisms, with differing levels of international involvement (or none at all) and individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking, institutional reform, vetting and dismissals, or a combination thereof. (UN Report of the Secretary General 2004)

And while the UN’s definition arguably subsumes the practices reviewed that many have identified as “social repair” (i.e. the full range...), studies that highlight social repair also contribute to substantial critique of international transitional justice policy and practice. While international bodies like the United Nations supposedly eschew “one-size fits all” approaches to transitional justice, the majority of their actions, recognitions, and/or support to transitioning societies still predominantly focus on the individual’s relation to the State, through criminal prosecution in the form of tribunals, truth commissions, and government and security system reform (ICTJ N.d.). Addressing these mechanisms, Das et al. insist however, that “legal procedure may well play a role, even a decisive one, in community coping, but that role cannot account for the continuity of everyday social experience, not can it alone bring about the repair of social ties and institutions” (2001:23).

As legal scholars Laurel Fletcher and Harvey Weinstein asserted in 2002, the nature of war had shifted from inter to intra state conflict, and the targeting of civilians, the destruction of infrastructure, and the breakdown of socio-economic institutions and networks of intimate familial relationships (the foundation for a functioning community as they describe it), are now key elements of contemporary conflict. Emphasizing the communal, rather than the individualized impact of war, the authors assert, “human suffering at a communal level is a
shared feature of contemporary conflict” (Fletcher and Weinstein 2002:576). Warning against imposed transitional justice interventions after violence and upheaval, such as truth commissions or trials, they emphasize that we must first ask locally, “what is social reconstruction?” (623).

Others have argued that there is little empirical evidence that national and international mechanisms such as truth commissions and criminal trials effectively deter further conflict or provide realistic foundations for societal reconstruction (Weinstein and Stover 2004). Some assert that nation building goals often obscure the need for reconciliation among affected populations, and unless transitional justice initiatives resonate with a majority of survivors, and address the communal rather than just an imagined individualized impact of war, they ultimately fail to assist in reconciliation processes (Theidon 2006, Shaw et al. 2010). Worse still, they may serve to further entrench historically violent social relations (Hinton 2010, Alfred and Corntassel 2005).

Transitional justice practices have been further critiqued as a hegemonic enterprise that uses a contemporary “stage theory” discourse to support neo-imperial governance projects (Hinton 2010). Its narrow conception of time, and ignoring past injustice associated with colonialism or the slave trade for examples, ignores historical atrocity and continuing imperialism that perpetuates the violences of inequality, poverty, and conflict (Arbour 2008, Clarke 2009, Cole 2001, Riaño-Acalá 2006, Soyinka 2000). As a “rule of law movement” (Clarke 2009), the practice of transitional justice emphasizes ideologically informed legal processes that construct truths (or “fictions”, Clarke 2009) wherein civil and
political rights are distinct from social, economic, and cultural ones (Amadiume and An-Na’im 2000, Arbour 2008, Okello 2010, Arrazia and Roht-Arrazia 2008, Roht-Arriaza 2006). Furthermore, transitional justice practices reliance on the redemptive power of speaking and remembering (Shaw 2007, 2007a, Cole 2001), and specific testimonial narratives (Jackson 2005, Ross 2010), seen in an emphasis on trials and truth commissions, ignores local cultural concepts and expressions of personhood, damage, repair, and redress (Shaw et al. 2010). It thus tends to posit those who experienced violence as conflict-affected people in need of rescue by an external authority, rather than as individuals and communities capable of dealing with their experiences (Clarke 2009).

In contradistinction, the study of social repair acknowledges the everyday as a primary site where agents might pursue deceptively “mundane” activities, and looks to lived actions, practices, and stories narrated rather than to historical or legal documentation and process, as found in dominant transitional justice practices, to understand how people meaningfully restore relationality (Riaño-Alcalá and Baines 2012). Considering a more place-based or localized transitional justice, would, according to Shaw et al, consider the "local" as a standpoint, a shifted center from which the rest of the world is viewed (2010:6). They call for a place-based practice (2010:22), which incorporates a more nuanced understanding of what justice, redress, and social reconstruction looks like. In the same volume, Moses Chrispus Okello further emphasizes that understanding local practices of “social repair” or “justice” are not enough, and that:
A shift to "place-based" forms of justice is not merely a matter of equity but offers a means of moving our conceptual frame beyond that of international law by allowing local critiques, priorities, and practices to show us alternative ways of conceptualizing justice and rights. (2010:279)

Accounting for these various contemporary contributions in my own understanding of social repair, I suggest that in addition to considering specific survivor-centered, agentic memory practices (Riaño-Alcalá 2006, Shaw 2007a), spirit engagements (Baines 2010, Igreja et al. 2008, Perera 2001, Theidon 2012), life project negotiations (Das 2007, Lubkemann 2008), storytellings (Jackson 2002, Baines 2015a, Oloya 2013), and grassroots processes (Riaño-Alcalá 2015, N.d.), understanding how individuals and communities “move on” after upheaval, must also fundamentally consider how the majority of people are able to subsist, which in rural Northern Uganda, particularly must consider the land and customary land tenure.

As I have learned in the rural Padibe sub-counties, the land itself, in addition to being vital for subsistence, is also fundamental to relatedness, to the ways in which people understand how they are related and what being related does (as will be explored in Chapters 3-5). I thus understand that the land is also essential to social repairing, to how people go about re-elaborating relatedness after conflict and upheaval. I learned that inter-generational activities that engage people in tekwaro, in indigenous knowledge that itself engenders participation in the creation and re-creation of social, political, and moral community
becomes possible mostly because of how the land, and the mode of land tenure, are a powerful unifying and organizing force in rural Acoli. As Acoli scholar Rose Nayaki explores, “customary land tenure goes beyond land as ‘an object’ to perceive land as ‘an item’ that defines peoples’ identity, social class, and social relationships as well as relationships with the soil/land that they had to put to use” (Nayaki 2011). As further explored in Chapter 3, strong connections between the land and human social relations have long been articulated by indigenous communities (Basso 1996, Todd 2016, Watts 2013, are some few examples). According to many scholars (Girling 1960, p’Bitek 1971), the name “Acoli” was given by the Arabs, however locally they were known as Luo Gang or Ugangi–the Luo that were found in the village or homestead.

The land in rural Acoli is necessary for survival and for subsistence. As an item or symbol that shapes social relations, and that lies at the heart of indigenous knowledge of a people known as “people of the home”, land in Acoli is thus able to re-gather people–despite the relational effects of the violences of war and displacement–in participatory encounters that work at re-elaborating relatedness, of social repairing. In Chapters 3 to 5, I particularly show how tic Acoli (work relating to subsistence), the creation of social unions and the legitimization of children through cuna, and kin-based community governance (kaka) are all grounded by the land and land tenure, and all work at re-elaborating relatedness. I understand elaborating and re-elaborating relatedness in contemporary post-conflict and post-displacement contexts as constituting social repairing.
Additionally, I learned that engaging with how the land provides both impetus and structured opportunities for constituting and re-constituting community (and the organization of social relations), through interactions with tekwaro, tries to “undo” or “unfold” the relational impacts of violence experienced during the war years. Similar to what Shaw calls the “art of forgetting” (2007), or Cole’s “directed forgetting” (2001), social repair in these contexts seeks a re-creation of everyday life whereby the violence of those years is “bracketed away” from everyday social relations. I use the term “bracketed away” (exploring this more in Chapter 5) to particularly differentiate these practices from Cole and Shaw’s forgetting, and to emphasize that people have to draw upon other frames of relationality—rather than on the violences experienced during the war and displacement years—specifically kin-based relatedness rooted in the land, to survive and live with themselves and others again. A return to the land, and to the customary system of land tenure, thus provoked practices that serve to elaborate and re-elaborate relatedness. I understand these practices as social repairing in contemporary rural Acoliland.

An emphasis on “bracketing away” the violence is due in large part to the kinds of violences experienced during the war and systems of customary tenure. For examples, the rates for Acoli youth who experienced abduction, and thus who were also forced to commit acts of violence were very high. About one in four girls and one in three boys were abducted at some point during the war (Annan 2008), which indicates that approximately 28% of youth were abducted and forced to commit acts of violence. Another study estimates that about 20% of abducted youth were often forced to beat or kill their own family members (Annan
and Blattman 2010). The camps themselves were a form of collective “social torture” (Dolan 2009) by Government, where other forms of close relational violence, leading to what John Jaramogi Oloya (2015:282) calls the “disintegration of the households” were facilitated. Notably, Opiyo Oloya states that the “Acholi-on-Acholi” violence committed and experienced in this war was unprecedented (2013:7). Enoji, the eldest man in the Padibe sub-counties touched on this when I asked him if “Kony’s war”, as it is often called (Iweny pa Kony), affected tekwaro pa Acoli. He answered:

Ah—there is always bad. Even up to now and up to tomorrow. But this war brought into Acoli that people can kill their own. It has really made the world to get spoiled and up to now, people are killing one another. And now, the world, the world is not as it used to be.

On top of the violence forced between people who were often related—by immediate family, lineage, clan, in-laws, or chiefdoms—mass displacement of the entire rural population from their lands struck at the very heart of relationality; the organization of social relationships and communal governance. I thus learned that the processes involved in social repairing in 2012 did not reference violent experiences or categorizations of individuals from the war and displacement (such as rebel, IDP, abductee etc.), and rather called upon unifying kin-based categorizations and experiences (daughter, son, mother, uncle, lineage, sub-clan etc.), social relationships, and sociality, “the world as it used to be”, relationally, grounded by the land.
Although Veena Das emphasizes how violence becomes folded into ordinary, everyday life and ongoing relationships, social repair in rural Padibe seems to suggest the ways that people try to “unfold” and separate those particular violences back “out” from the relationships themselves; the ways that they “bracket away” the violences experienced during the war from everyday life and social relationships in post-conflict and post-displacement contexts.

If social repair in rural Acoliland is understood as what makes home alive again, and examines how ongoing processes of the creation and re-creation of community through inter-generational engagement with tekwaro occurs, provoked by a return to the land, then the results of this study question what we may or may not understand about social repair by assuming a priori, and maintaining that, violence is an enduring primary point of reference in social repair, indeed in “justice” practices in general. For people in the rural Padibe sub-counties, two to three years after return, repair indicated a refusal of the defining power of the violence, and the continuous work of re-orientating life to a different cardinal point, to the land, and to relatedness to kin-based relations that order life on the land. Practices concerning the procurement of food from the land, like work (Chapter 3), the legitimization of unions and offspring (Chapter 4), and sub-clan governance (Chapter 5), then become primary in understanding both the war’s effects on social relations, and the ways in which people seek to repair them through the creation and re-creation of an everyday not still categorized, defined, and thus not still organized by their recent experiences of forced violence.
The next section briefly introduces the research project and questions to better situate these learnings about social repair. I follow by elaborating on my own conceptualization of social repairing by considering how tekwaro is grounded in the land, the metaphor of relatedness (Hutchinson 2000) in rural Acoliland. After considering tekwaro as philosophy, as a basis of social organization, and as practice, I’ll finally argue that participatory inter-generational interactions, grounded and engendered by the land, provoke engagement with tekwaro that constitutes social repairing. This conceptualizes social repairing as the quotidian creation and re-creation of social, political, and moral community, as the unspectacular participatory engagements with tekwaro necessary for continuous—though not in any means static—practices of relatedness, and thus of repair.

1.4 Brief Project Overview

In May 2010, after consulting with who would become my host family (including some members of their extended family, or lineage) at a lunch in their village of Pabwoc East (about one year after they left Padibe IDP camp), I was invited to live in their family’s homestead to conduct my PhD research. I told those gathered about a conversation I had had with a young woman, Beatrice, with whom I had worked while she— and they— were still displaced in Padibe IDP camp from 2006 to 2008.¹⁵ The conversation occurred while we were reviewing photographs that I had taken of her over the previous three years in

¹⁵ Beatrice was not directly related to Augustine or the people of Pabwoc. However, they knew her from when I worked with her in the camp (2006-2008). She was also from the same place (geographic and genealogic) as Augustine’s mother, Panyinga. Augustine is also godfather to her first-born son.
preparation for an exhibition and booklet. Discussing potential venues in Canada, I then asked if she would like me to organize a photo exhibit here in Padibe, or perhaps in the closest town of Kitgum? After a long sigh...and after thinking for about a minute, this was Beatrice’s answer:

   No, I do not have much to say to people here. They already know my situation.
   Rather, I want to learn from them. I want to learn about Acoli Tekwaro to make my future look like other people and to make me fit in the society. Because I missed learning Tekwaro when I was young and even when I was growing up. I would ask other Acoli to teach me the way of how to live with others, and how to be a good Acoli woman. (Personal communication, July 2008)

I then described how others talked about youth being “out of” Tekwaro, and, provocatively, of youth not wanting to know “Tekwaro”, and I asked if they thought that the topic of war and displacement’s effects on Tekwaro and youth, and on community in general, was appropriate to research. Several people said they would welcome attention to questions of Tekwaro. Specifically, Acaa Margaret delivered an impassioned speech detailing her own concerns about youth and Tekwaro. She said that they too were very worried about youth—that most youth did not want to farm, and that they lingered in the town center (former camp)—but that the adults were so very busy with the work of rebuilding, that they could not pay sufficient attention to it. She concluded that it would be good to have me there to “turn people’s minds’ to these things.” A male teenager also spoke, saying that adults and elders do not make time for teaching these days, yet there are many things that the youth
would really like to know. Perhaps my presence would also, as Auntie said, "help turn the adults and elders minds to youth again."

I returned to Canada after that 2010 visit, and coordinated the project with Augustine, my host family’s eldest son, by email. Although this would be my first time doing research with Augustine’s family in Pabwoc, it was an extension of relations established previously when I lived next to them in Padibe IDP camp for one month in 2008.

In consultation with Pabwoc’s elders and sub-clan leader, it was agreed that I could live in Pabwoc for my project. They requested that I create a book for them about tekwaro Pabwoc, detailing the sub-clan’s history and the founding of the village, among other details. I agreed. I asked if I could conduct a full village survey while living there, to document residents’ recollections of their movements during the war, but also to discuss with them their conceptualizations of tekwaro. I also wanted to participate in daily life as much as I was able, including sub-clan meetings and gatherings, when appropriate. They agreed. Augustine asked if I would like to partner on a project with a youth group he had co-founded while in the camp (in 2003). The group had created cultural programs for other displaced youth in the war years using music, dance, and drama. They were now looking for funding and partners for a new project of “cultural revival”, and he had introduced me

16 Augustine had a room in the center and could access the internet more readily.
17 Pabwoc is both a village and a sub-clan. With time the village of Pabwoc has grown and has become Pabwoc East village and Pabwoc West village. More details in Chapter 3.
18 I had asked what I might do with my time that was useful to them. It is attached here in pdf form as Appendix A.
19 The original survey that served as a guide for the conversations is attached here as Appendix B.
to them in 2008 and again in 2010. As will be further explored in Chapter 2, I agreed to
Collaborate with the group.

This period of fieldwork in Pabwoc for which we were organizing adds to my previous
Experiences in the area, namely: a cumulative two months of traveling throughout the north
during the war in 2004 and 2005 (as an unpaid photographer), a cumulative of four months living
in Padibe IDP camp between December 2006 and July 2008 (as a photographer-researcher
pursuing my MFA), and the two week consultation visit previously described in 2010 (as an
Anthropologist), where I stayed in Padibe Town Center (the former camp, called the center by
Residents) and visited friends and acquaintances in their home villages. For this main period of
Fieldwork in 2012, I lived in Pabwoc with my host family from March to October, with a short
Break in May.²⁰

Attempting to understand the inter-generational strife and the idiom of tekwaro being used
to express post-conflict concerns, I attended to inter-generational relations and the
Transmission of Acoli indigenous knowledge, and asked:

1. How and why is tekwaro, and attention to inter-generational knowledge transmission
referred to and mobilized by the different generations in dealing with the conflict and its effects?

2. How were inter-generational knowledge transmissions transformed during war and

²⁰ A timeline can be consulted, see Appendix C.
displacement, and how did those transformations shape people’s everyday relational practices?

The next section elaborates the framework within which I have come to understand both these questions themselves, as well as some answers to these questions. Thinking through the idea of tekwaro itself, guided by the work of Acoli scholar Okot p’Bitek, I explore how engagement with tekwaro is a learning process that involves inter-generational interactions, negotiation, and appropriation. Drawing attention to how land tenure and social organization practices engendered by a return to the land provides frameworks of engagement that perform social repair, I emphasize that engagement with tekwaro, both historically and in response to the recent years of war and displacement, contributes to the creation (and recreation) of participatory social, political, and moral communities. I close by providing an overview of each chapter of the dissertation.

1.5 Framework: Tekwaro, Relatedness, and Social Repair

My thinking through tekwaro and social repair in the rural Padibe sub-counties is reliant on the teachings of the late Acoli writer and scholar Okot p’Bitek (1931-1982), specifically on my understanding of three of his ideas about tekwaro, indigenous knowledge, or as he usually translated it, “culture” or “oral tradition.” First, he conceptualizes “culture” as a philosophy of a people as it is lived and celebrated in society (1986:13). He states that culture, or to use terms he employs interchangeably throughout his work, social philosophy, or worldview, or ideology, refers to a people’s shared interpretation of the “meaning of being alive in this world” (1986:14). Second, p’Bitek asserts that the
organizations that people live in, which he call institutions, are informed by, and built around a people’s culture, their social philosophy, their worldview, their ideology (1986:13). He emphasizes that “African” identity is relational, and contrasts this belief with the Western liberal concept of autonomy and individuality by stating that man is actually only human because of his connections to others (p’Bitek 1986:19-20, Imbo 2002:131). Importantly, he states that when one becomes odoko dano, a human being, one has “imbibed the philosophical ideas of the society as well as how to live and celebrate it” (1986:27). Tekwaro then, in addition to being social philosophy is also a guide for the organization of social institutions, and informs concepts of personhood; it is thus intimately entwined with relatedness. Third, he asserts that tekwaro as philosophy, and concerned with relatedness, is not something separate or distinguishable from “the way of life of a people”, and that tekwaro and relatedness are only truly expressed in “life as it is lived”, through practice.21

P'Bitek’s insights into tekwaro as philosophy, as the basis of social organization, and as practice provide a coherent frame in which to consider the pervasive inter-generational angst around tekwaro that first prompted this study. I will build upon each of these points in turn to show why kin-based inter-generational practices themselves, provoked by a return to the land and subsistence farming way of life, are precisely the processes that activate participatory engagement in tekwaro, which elaborates and re-elaborates

21 p'Bitek’s ideas on social philosophy also deny the oft-separation in Western philosophical practice between reflection and practice (Wiredu 2011).
relatedness. Kin-based intergenerational practices in rural Acoli are thus important potential sites for social repairing in post-conflict rural Acoliland.

1.5.1 Tekwaro as philosophy

First, tekwaro imagined as social philosophy concerned with worldviews and the meaning of being alive in the world necessarily takes a processual view of tekwaro. My use of the translation of tekwaro to indigenous knowledge reflects this stance. As the world changes, cultural philosophy must be adapted and made relevant by those who use it. Although residents’ may seem to speak of tekwaro as a “thing” that one can be “in” or “out” of, these expressions do not reference a set of static, unchanging, “traditional” ideas about, and correlating practices within the world. The transmission of indigenous knowledge, therefore, is never a simple act of transfer of knowledge, but rather the contemporary engagement and negotiation with the past to make sense of the present. Audra Simpson, in her work in her own Kahnawake Mohawk community, adamantly fights the idea of so-called authentic static cultural traditions, and suggests that “…the past and the present are in a conversation with each other – that culture (and as such, tradition), is a matter of communication, creation and meaning” (Simpson 2003:142). Marilyn Strathern, in her study on changing notions of kinship in England with the advent of new reproduction technologies, also emphasizes that transformation is inherent in tradition “…ideas can only emerge from their antecedents, it is tradition that changes: indeed, it is all that can”

22 I am aware however, that in many parts of the world the fight for recognition of political and territorial sovereignty within settler states is linked to proving the ongoing practice of “ancient” traditions. As Shaylih Muehlmann argues (on language), the measure of authenticity is both a formal and informal criterion for the recognition of indigenous rights (2013).
(Strathern 1992:11). Jennifer Cole, in her examination of social practices through which the Betsimisaraka remember the colonial past in Madagascar, states, that “what is remembered as “tradition” is perhaps the most “modern” construct of all” (Cole 2001:8). And Gloria Emeagwali and George Sefa Dei emphasize that African indigenous knowledge is in perpetual flux from dialogue with contemporary events and other knowledges:

Through time, such forms of knowledge while transformed have not been abandoned... Such knowledge has adapted to the times to serve pressing social issues and challenges. Such knowledge has not remained static, neither has it been confined to the shores of the African continent. Like all knowledge systems, such knowledges have diffused and interacted with other ways of knowing from other communities. (Emeagwali 2014:iix)

To be “in culture” then does not imply the strict following of a so-called traditional regime of practice and thought, or a complete refusal of other forms of knowledge, rather it implies engagement with one’s own indigenous knowledge, and thus participation in (including negotiation, disagreements, and contestations with) the living social philosophy of one's social, political, and moral community. The explicit link between tekwaro or indigenous knowledge and philosophy, worldviews, or ideology, helps to emphasize tekwaro as processual, as participatory or needing active engagement, and as something relational— that comes about by or through social relationships and interactions. Especially in considering the inter-generational angst regarding tekwaro in post-conflict contexts, this
link also brings up important questions regarding the transmission or learning of tekwaro. As Barbara Myerhoff expressed in some of her final writings:

In anthropology it is a truism that culture is, above all, learned; it is not innate. It is a set of arguments, a set of understandings, on how to adapt to the world, how to look at the world, that is passed on from generation to generation. But one of the things that we have looked at very little is how it is learned. (Myerhoff 2007:61)

Social repair in the Padibe sub-counties, as I understand it and as I explore in the substantive chapters of this thesis, is primarily found within these “learning” processes, these interactions. And these interactions are manifest in kin-based inter-generational relations themselves, in sometimes friction-filled processes whereby elements of tekwaro (or philosophy or worldviews or culture) are variously evaluated, adapted, departed from, applied, rejected, and ultimately transformed to serve the needs of contemporary socio-economic, cultural, and political life.

1.5.2 Tekwaro as a basis of social organization

Understanding tekwaro as fundamental to the organizing principles of how people live together is not novel, as evidenced in anthropology’s long engagement with questions of culture, kinship, and social organization. Some of the earliest anthropological work comprised investigations into how people were related and the forms of social organization
that ordered daily life (for example, Morgan 1963, Rivers 1914, 1968, among others). Based on biologically-informed conceptions of “blood relations”, relationships that ordered everyday life, as well as institutions, were discerned. These scholars mainly focused on the political and legal rights and obligations associated with descent, and applied their analysis to understanding a range of local social organization practices, from marriage, to land tenure, to politics (for examples, Evans-Pritchard 1965, Fortes et al. 1940, Malinowski 1913, among others). Much of this work took place within the Colonial context of domination, and as Clarke points out, “in the early twentieth century, as anthropology was increasingly shaped by scientific rigour, ways of sorting and typologizing subjects were connected to ways of making objects” (Clarke 2004:1). Others soon began to emphasize, however, the exchange, communication, and networks between various social relations, rather than strictly descent (or blood relations), as key to understanding social organization (Lévi-Strauss 2006, Mitchell 1969, Gulliver 1971). More processual approaches built on these histories of the discipline’s engagement with questions of “how people are related”, and began to better acknowledge the interplay of historical and contemporary events, as well as several different “categories” of relations reckoned, for example, by such things as residence, ritual affiliation, and usufruct, in addition to strictly biology and marriage (Needham 1971, McKellin 1991, Rivière 1971, Turner 1996).

Yanagisako (1977) pointed out the gender bias in kinship and its categorizations, and

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23 However much these scholars were or were not part of the Colonial enterprise, wittingly or unwittingly (I discuss this more in Chapter 2), I include their work here for a consideration of the genealogy of the concept of relatedness within the Anthropological discipline.

24 Problematically, but in this quest for scientific, comparative studies of societies as objects, these analyses did not often contend with the dynamic, processual elements of these practices.
further contributed to a processual approach by stating that a male-centered approach with pre-conceived analytic categories, such as jural-political and domestic domains, detracts from better understanding what kinship is really all about.

While these more nuanced, processual approaches grew the analytic use of “kinship”, David Schneider’s incriminating critique (1984) finally rocked the field of kinship studies, cementing what he had begun in 1968 by charging that kinship, and thus social organization studies that relied on kinship, were based on westernized cultural models of “the facts” of genealogy and biology (biogenetics). Other cultures and societies may not perceive the creation and foundation of life in the same way (sperm, egg), and any insights one could obtain from the analysis of social relations based on an ultimately foreign model (etic) would thus be the western anthropologist’s projection. Kinship, if used as an analytic concept, needed to be defined in terms understood and lived by the anthropologist’s interlocutors.

Building on Schneider’s critiques that the so-called “facts” of relations varied from context to context, from culture to culture, and from time to time, Janet Carsten (1995) took up the acknowledgement and use of indigenous models or idioms of “the facts” as an alternative and generative way to inquire into kinship and everyday social organization. Working with a Malay community on the island of Langwaki, Carsten found that substances like blood and food were mutually constitutive of personhood, and there was no binary separation between what people in her own culture term “the social” and “the biological.” Someone
would thus become both fully human and related through the mutual sharing of substance. This had a significant impact on a variety of everyday factors, including how people reckon descent, practice marriage, pattern their residency, and share food. Carsten points out that although Schneider critiqued the social-biological binary projected from his own culture’s biogenetic beliefs, his critique at the same time did not surmount this same binary.25

In support of a concept like relatedness, Sharon Hutchinson (1996, 2000) explores blood and cattle as “interpersonal binding social media” for the Nuer communities she worked with, and makes sense of how Nuer’s “cultural paradigm” transformed, as did their social organization, with peoples’ navigations of diverse historical changes from Colonialism, to the introduction of cash, to two civil wars. She looks to changing idioms or, as she puts it, “metaphors” of identity, personhood, and relatedness in Nuer communities through time to explain shifts in social organizational practices. For example, while in pre-colonial times, collectively owned cattle exclusively begat children (through bridewealth exchange, for men), the introduction of money to the equation, while still mostly mediated through the category of cattle, indicated the decreasing power of extended relations in this most important aspect of life. This shift from the necessity of extended political alliances (access to cattle), for reproduction, but also for subsistence and security in local wars, to the viability of smaller, autonomous communities therefore also coincided with a decrease in

25 Many scholars have taken up this social-biological divide as a cultural bias inherent in how Western society conceives of knowledge inquiries (research) that essentially naturalize a constructed, social process; to “discover” truth, rather than to be engaged in actively constructing it (see Haraway 1989, Franklin 1998, as examples). This connects to the making of “objects” by earlier kinship scholars.
the power of elderly, cattle-owning men. The relational blood-cattle paradigm, or metaphor and idiom of relatedness, had thus transformed with the introduction of money, guns, and paper. Marilyn Strathern similarly emphasizes that a society’s assumptions about social relations largely depends on the way they perceive the creation of personhood (Strathern 1992), and that those conceptual categories of personhood and relatedness, while fluid, necessarily impact human practice and social organization through time.

Throughout this thesis, I draw on and expand Janet Carsten’s (1995, 1997, 2000) approach to questions of how people are related in the everyday, to kinship, personhood, and social organization, as well as to prescriptions for how these are constituted by indigenous knowledge itself, as “relatedness.” My use of the term “relatedness” foregrounds the importance of indigenous cultural concepts of “the social” when seeking to understand “social repair”, and as a result, suggests that in contemporary contexts, land is indeed the primary idiom of relatedness in rural Acoliland. As such, the land is able to act as a ground (so to speak) for the re-gathering of kin and community, and as an impetus and host of inter-generational engagements with tekwaro. The land as relatedness in Acoli centers how the land itself acts as a mediator that allows people opportunity for interactions that re-create relatedness in post conflict and post-displacement contexts. It also suggests that elaborating or re-elaborating relatedness in communities itself constitutes ongoing historical processes of social repairing—the ways in which communities respond to both internal and external conflicts (whether they be local, national, regional, international etc.).
I am thus also particularly interested in how conceptualizing categories of relationality according to indigenous conceptions of relatedness allows a nuanced consideration of what has been termed the “morality” of relatedness, or the more moral aspects of kinship. This is of course primary to Okot p’Bitek’s own assertions that it is precisely one’s kin relations that make one human (1986:19). Obligations and responsibilities, as well as privileges and rights, are fundamental to the morality of kin relations. As one elderly woman explained to me while shelling g-nuts one cool evening around the fire: “Needing people creates good relations. Not needing people, by having too much money, can create many many problems here.”

The assertion that relatedness, or kinship, is fundamentally about morality was first emphasized within anthropology by Myers Fortes (1969) when he spoke of kinship amity, and stated that “kinship is binding; it creates inescapable moral claims and obligations” (1969:242). Bloch too emphasizes that it is the generality and continuity of kinship, which are of prime importance, and that these attributes are due to its morality (1973:88). The “morality of kinship” has also more recently been brought to the fore again in contemporary work on what is now known as the African continent that engages with policy, for example in Elizabeth Cooper’s work on the so-called orphan “crisis” in Kenya (2011:42).

I have chosen to make my analytical interest in morality explicit because I came to understand that how people are troubled by questions of who should be responsible for who, and why, are not just experienced as per a distinctive moment of change in
political economic history [...] questions of why and how kinship implicate responsibilities, and whether or how these relate to any morality of kinship, remain under examined and under-theorised.

The concept of a morality of kinship is also echoed today by several Acoli scholars, notably Opiyo Oloya:

In Acholi culture, a relative is someone you can rely upon in difficult times, someone you can trust and expect to help you out of trouble. This is understandable because, as P. Oruni (1994) points out, identity and relations between individuals are defined by *wat* (constitution). He notes, ‘every aspect of Acholi life, the rights, obligations and privileges of the individual, social service administration, civics, politics, defence and security, is defined and exercised in accordance with provisions of *Wat Constitution.*’ (Oloya 2013:18)

Oloya further states that:

Culture is the aggregation of shared values in a defined system from which individuals derive not only their identities but also their orientation to the world. There is an assumption of solidarity and unity of purpose among those who subscribe to those values. (Oloya 2013:17)

My focus on relatedness, and my inquiry into *tekwaro* to both understand and examine changing practices that can create and re-create relatedness after wartime and
displacement, aspires to a nuanced, relational exploration of how tekwaro (as "social philosophy" and the basis of social relations and social organization, and thus of morality) was affected, or how people believe that it was affected, by their recent experiences of violence. This ultimately allows an appreciation of the inter-generational practices involved in engaging with tekwaro, through which relationality, morality, as well as rights and responsibilities are learned/transmitted/adapted (as will be explored in Chapters 3 through 5).

Again, the results of my learning suggest that the land itself is the main idiom (Carsten 1995) or metaphor (Hutchinson 1996) of relatedness in context. Although blood relations, exchange, and commensality (to name a few) are all idioms or metaphors that contribute to relatedness as I understood it in the rural Padibe sub-counties, the land itself, and practices directly and indirectly concerning the land (access, residence, tenure, inheritance, labour, commensality, etc.) are what ultimately constitute relatedness. Activities centered by people's relations with the land, activities that engender engagement with tekwaro, which serve to manifest, elaborate, and organize social organization and indigenous governance, and that provokes participations in one's social, political, and moral community, is precisely what I understand to be practices of social repair in the rural Padibe sub-counties. This study thus suggests that attention to how people and communities subsist and survive, to the relations whereby one accesses and produces that subsistence, to land tenure and the land, is still fundamental in considering relatedness, and the complexities of how people reckon they are related and what being related does. It is thus also essential for
understanding the basis of how they remake relatedness, what I understand as social repair. "Ngom pito dano", a mother of seven told me as we walked to the gardens one day, “the land grows people.”

1.5.3 Tekwaro as practice

Understanding tekwaro as social philosophy, as the basis for social organization, and as “ways of life”, fundamentally engages with both methods and theories of practice. An examination of everyday inter-generational practices of social repair in a rural village is thus a result of both my practical and theoretical orientation. Practically, I undertook my longest period of fieldwork living in the rural village of Pabwoc East in 2012. It had been about two to three years, or two to three agricultural cycles, since most residents had returned to their ngom kwaro from displacement, after an absence of between 6-11 years.26

90% of village residents survived at that time from subsistence farming alone, and thus an obvious priority was the hard work necessary for producing enough food stuff, of rebuilding houses and granaries, of working to establish i) a functioning, sustainable and sustaining homestead, and ii) the governing structures that secured that homestead. An emphasis on practices that contribute to these goals, grounded in the land and land tenure, and a subsequent privileging of the relations, and notions of relatedness that contribute to those goals, is due in large part to the specifics of the time and place of my research.

26 The number of years varies, and will be further explored in Chapter 3.
The rural village as the unit of social space in this study also contributes to understanding land as the prime idiom of relatedness, and the valorization of the activation of inter-generational relations and thus inter-generational practices, over peer relations for example, for similar reasons. Based on my calculations according to the Republic of Uganda’s 2014 Census, 85% of people in Acoliland (comprising the seven districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Nwoya, Agago, Amuru and Lamwo) live in rural areas; as opposed to peri-urban or urban areas (for example, Padibe Town Council, the center, is not considered rural in the census). As will be explored throughout the work, residents access land, the primary livelihood resource, in most rural areas through the norms of customary tenure, and approximately 90% of all land in Acoliland is under customary tenure (Atkinson and Hopwood 2013: i). In the case of Pabwoc East (and much of rural Acoliland) customary tenure is governed by kin-based communal governance organizations (clans, sub-clans, lineages) (Oloya 2015). I use the term kin-based communal governance organizations after John Jaramogi Oloya’s description of Acoli community governance as social, political, and moral (2015:02), to describe both contemporary and historical Acoli social organization and their attending indigenous social and political institutions. The kin-based communal governance organizations transmit important communal privileges (like land rights), and responsibilities (like upholding moral norms), inter-generationally. A study of social repair practices of those who remained in the town center (former IDP camp) or who migrated to one of the large city centers in Acoliland (Gulu, Kitgum or Pader) may very well emphasize the primary importance of other kinds of relations, notions of relatedness, and thus practices, that both help make sense of philosophically and organize/secure life and
livelihood in those specific social spaces. Different concepts of relatedness, in different times and in different social spaces, would thus necessarily emphasize different practices as constitutive of, or contributive to, social repair. Conceptualizing social repair as intergenerational practices of engagement with indigenous knowledge provoked by a return to the land is thus due to the study's interest in how the majority of residents in Acoli—those still living in rural areas and surviving from the land—make home living again.

My understanding of how inter-generational engagement with tekwaro actually works to re-elaborate relatedness and perform social repair draws upon two separate, yet connected approaches to knowledge transmission or learning. Both conceptions of oral tradition as social action, and practice theory consider learning as relational, and as something that occurs in, between, and through interactions.

Recognizing Acoli oral tradition as a form of social action draws upon Okot p'Bitek's ideas of oral tradition as inter-generational and performative, and insists that oral traditions are the principal means of socialization and education (despite formal schooling), whose practice or performance promotes moral development (Apoko 1967, p’Bitek 1963), enforces social norms (Okumu 2000), reinforces reciprocal kin relations (Ocitti 1973), and provides the conceptual tools for people to examine and act in all aspects of social life (p’Bitek 1963, 1974). Although these authors mostly focused on specific Acoli oral

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27 I have to acknowledge here that individuals and families have sought different means of social repairing, including migration to city centers in Acoli, elsewhere in Uganda, and abroad as well. Rather than being wholly concerned with all practices of social repairing, I am concerned here with what this specifically looks like within the spatial confines of the rural village in Acoli.
literatures, such as songs, folk talks, and proverbs, p’Bitek reminds us that oral literature cannot be dis-embedded from its social contexts (1963). Dances where songs are sung, and wang oo (fireside chats) where folktales are told, as examples, are part of a range of practices, of “ways of life” where oral tradition, or as Ociiti (1973) describes it, “indigenous education” is invoked. Thinking about oral tradition described in the ways the above authors do—or conceptualizing oral tradition as an essential part of indigenous education—particularly draws upon Gloria Emeagwali’s (2014) definition of indigenous knowledge as “the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs, and values accumulated over time in a particular locality.”

Indigenous knowledge, oral tradition, and indigenous education is thus understood as a kind of inter-generational social action that constitutes social, political, and moral communities through inter-generational interactions. Engaging with indigenous knowledge is thus a social and relational activity whereby reality is constantly being created, affirmed, contested, and reproduced. Ruth Finnegan, an oral tradition scholar, emphasizes the creative interactions involved in performing oral traditions, and states that “when oral literature is seen as “social action” rather than as sociocultural reflex, change and creativity appear as the normal exercise of human capacities rather than as disobedience to the governing rules of a static system” (Finnegan 1977:268-271). Barbara Myerhoff also speaks of conflict and compromise as essential to inter-generational knowledge transmissions; as the means by which meaning is created by everyone involved (2007:81). To speak of tekwaro in this way emphasizes how interactive practices, specifically inter-
generational ones, are the main means through which social philosophy and the organization of social relations are transmitted, elaborated, and transformed through time.

At the same time, Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice (2008) also examines how individuals and communities pass on knowledge and learn. He conceptualizes the social world as made up of people who exert agency, strategize, survive, and cope, based on a combination of their historical knowledge and lived experiences, within larger structures that also serve to shape and define that knowledge, and those experiences. The interactions between these elements is termed “habitus”, a learned system of generative schemes (2008:55), that results from perpetually ongoing interactions and processes, from everyday practice. This concept acknowledges how generative schemes, what I understand as an element of social philosophy, an aspect of indigenous knowledge, interact with individuals’ specific histories and agencies through everyday practices. In the case of a rural village in Acoliland then, how individuals’ “learning” or “appropriation” of indigenous knowledge is a kind of social action that occurs through everyday activities of engagement and practice.

The notion of habitus, and its system of generative schemes, also resembles Sir Frederic Charles Bartlett’s schema theory in his 1932 work on remembering (1961). Bartlett was a

28 As Shaw eloquently addresses, although some charge that habitus references a closed cycle of repetitive change and static reproduction, De Boeck for example, she reminds us that the past (precolonial, preindustrial etc.) was no less marked by fragmentation and crisis than the present. If one acknowledges that there has always been experiences of rupture and disjunction, then understanding habitus as encompassing reactions to rupture, rather than simply reproducing an ideal static notion of stable time, is inevitable (2002:5)
psychologist who undertook experimental studies on remembering, imaging, perceiving, and recounting, and who describes remembering as a cognitive social practice whereby an individual’s past associations and experiences are continuously rearranged and changed through their encounters with contemporary phenomena. His idea of “conventionalization” specifically looks at processes whereby new experiences become internalized, or appropriated, in social settings. Maurice Bloch draws upon this work, and emphasizes that “passing on” or transmitting “culture” involves acts of re-creation (2005) whereby, what he calls cultural schema interact with new experiences to re-create knowledge. This is partly so because of how cultural schema allow an individual to infer, to perceive knowledge that is not necessarily represented or communicated, knowledge “that goes without saying” (2012). It is these inferences, or the capacity for inference, that essentially works to assimilate new information and experiences. Elaborating on this function, William McKellin (1995:22) emphasizes that: “during information processing, the features used to represent knowledge are matched with the features of new information...New information that does not fit the established configuration of features is not rejected, but used to modify the previously existing schema.”

How oral tradition is transmitted inter-generationally, how knowledge is re-created by a learner, how new information modifies previously existing schema, or how one learns through interactions was also the focus of much of Lev Vygotskii’s work. Vygotskii was a Belarusian psychologist who mainly worked in developmental psychology in the 1920s and 1930s. He found that learning occurs through interactions, which leads to the
internalization of knowledge, which then leads to the appropriation of the knowledge (Vygotskii 1978). One learns to use a pencil from a teacher, but then one can use a pencil to draw what one likes, perhaps unlike the teacher had taught.

Whether conceptualized as social action processes involved in the inter-generational practice of oral tradition (as explored by p'Bitek, Okumu, Apoko, Ocitti, and Finnegan above), or in re-creative learning through interactions (as explored by Bourdieu, Bartlett, Bloch, McKellin, and Vygotskii above), both approaches stress practices whereby individuals’ agencies interact with larger corpuses of knowledge to produce new knowledge that orders, or provides guidelines for individuals and society. This continuously negotiated and re-negotiated knowledge serves to establish relations between individuals, and reproduces and/or reconfigures the worlds in which people live (Ortner 1996). Inter-generational interactions therefore engender multi-generational participation in the continuous work of building and rebuilding relatedness, and the creation and re-creation of social, political, and moral communities. I recognize practices whereby these interactions occur as significant sites of social repair in post-conflict contexts because of how they are implicitly concerned with remaking, and redefining, social relationships and their organization.

When speaking about tekwaro, generative schemes, social philosophy, or cultural schema, it is clear that what one remembers, both consciously and unconsciously necessarily impacts and is impacted by the practices employed by self and others to navigate,
strategize, and cope with contemporary life. These insights are thus valuable when considering how individuals and communities “move on” after war and displacement, and helps identify what social repair consists of in context. Rosalind Shaw addresses this in discussing how while people almost never discuss the slave trade where she worked in Sierra Leone, past traumatic memories of the slave trade are embodied in contemporary practice. She asserts that contemporary experiences of violence (a kleptocratic state, a violent rebel war) are experienced in terms of images and practices that serve to connect present and past experiences of “predatory commercial flows” (2002:12). As Shaw puts it, “people do not respond as tabulae rasae when they construct and confront transformative events and political processes; rather, experiences of those events and processes that become sedimented as memory are themselves mediated and configured by memory” (Shaw 2002:10). Jennifer Cole also examines contemporary social behaviour and practices that mediate memories of colonialism and contemporary upheaval in Madagascar. In her work with Betsimisaraka she emphasizes the way that these practices (and the memories they enable) “are part of larger historical processes of transformation: they are part of Betsimisaraka efforts to survive” (2001:29). Hutchinson’s investigation in South Sudan of how “global historical factors of ever-increasing scale and complexity are subtly registered within regionally specific social and cultural fields” (1996:29) is another example of how studies of war and upheaval fruitfully utilize these insights.

The results of the current study highlight that there is an explicit connection between the learning of indigenous knowledge and elaborating relatedness, and that relatedness itself is
linked to people’s ongoing efforts to manage and deal with historico-political events and processes, including violence. Elaborating and re-elaborating relatedness is thus social repairing in context.

1.5.4 *The land as primary metaphor of relatedness in rural Acoli*

How the appropriation, assimilation, or application of new knowledge functions, drawing upon both oral tradition and practice-based and cognitive approaches, is especially interesting to consider while thinking through inter-generational angst regarding *tekwaro* in the post-conflict period. I understand that these learning interactions take place within processes that provide frameworks for inter-generational engagement, processes that are themselves provoked by a return to the land. As I will explore more fully in Chapter 3, the land, as the idiom of relatedness, acts as an anchor (Carsten 2007, Hutchins 2005) for frameworks wherein elaborations of indigenous conceptions of relatedness are practiced. And it is therefore these frameworks of practice—which provide guidelines and sites for interactions, internalization, and appropriation of *tekwaro*—which constitute social repairing in rural Acoliland.

Understanding how these frameworks of practice work to re-gather people in interactions that re-elaborate relatedness (social repairing) resembles Star and Griesler’s (1989), and Star’s (2010), idea of a boundary object. They describe a boundary object as a thing or action that mediates between people, and according to Star (who was interested in the nature of cooperative work in a natural history museum), boundary objects host
interactions, allowing different groups to work together without demanding complete consensus or homogeneous understanding (2010:602). As McKellin explores in Managalase political discourse, taking up the idea of a boundary object, common ground and cooperation is the result of processes of interaction and then negotiation, mediated in part by boundary objects. Boundary “objects” can also be processes or frameworks, in his case the processes involved in the indirect form of discourse called Ha’a (McKellin 2016).

In post-war Acoliland, common ground and cooperation between peoples is achieved through frameworks of practice, or boundary processes, like subsistence-related works (explored in Chapter 3), courtship practices (explored in Chapter 4) and the creation of a sub-clan constitution (explored in Chapter 5). These frameworks are provided by the land itself, specifically the organization of social relations by the customary system of land tenure. I consider these practices constitutive of social repair because of how they provide for opportunities of inter-generational engagement, and subsequent learning of tekwaro and the re-elaboration of relatedness, without necessarily requiring consensus or homogenous understandings.

This may explain why the transmission, or learning, of indigenous knowledge in the contexts of war—and particularly displacement—is generally more difficult, and why there is heightened generalized angst. Youth’s appropriation of indigenous knowledge, of applying and adapting tekwaro to severely changed life circumstances and socio-economic-political realities, to war and displacement experiences, already becomes much more challenging. A
lack of frameworks–rooted in the land–that provoke kin-based inter-generational interactions and guidelines for cooperation during the years of displacement and violence, in the case of rural Acoliland at least, exasperated the already substantial challenges of learning or transmitting *tekwaro* in rapidly changing contexts. And although there are deep histories of upheaval, change, and flux of rural communities in Acoliland (as I will explore further in Chapter 3), the recent LRA-Government war is the only such incident in the past 100 years to massively uproot families and communities from their lands. Furthermore, the predominant presence of other frameworks for social interactions within the IDP camps, those organized by Government, NGOs, and/or churches, all affected the kinds of knowledge that was re-created or learned or transmitted during the years of war and displacement. These effects, including reduced authority of kin-based communal governance organizations, and decreased participation of community members therein, became some of the primary concerns of the rural population as they left the IDP camps and returned to land governed through customary tenure.

Beginning from Okot p’Bitek’s ideas about *tekwaro* as social philosophy, as relatedness, and as practice, I am able to think alongside the pervasive inter-generational angst regarding *tekwaro* in post-conflict contexts. I can then understand the angst itself as an expression of concern with multi-generational engagement in the building of relatedness, and of social, political, and moral community. I thus understand social repair in the rural Padibe sub-counties by considering how the transmission, or rather the learning of indigenous knowledge—as processual, relational, and practice-based—takes place through various
interactions. These interactions are hosted or engendered by frameworks that are rooted in the land that enable the often friction filled, yet generative and inventive interactions to take place.

The idea of participation in these interactions or practices is paramount. Inter-generational practices themselves are sites of encounter and struggle between the generations, of engagement in the hard work of the transmission and of learning indigenous knowledge. It is engagement with indigenous knowledge, and its evaluation—including disagreements, contradictions, conflicts and “imperfectly shared meaning and knowledge” (Wolf 1999)—and finally its application or appropriation in the present, not the strict following of traditional protocol, that is key to its transmission or learning, and it is this that is key to relatedness. Re-creating relatedness, or re-creating a social, political, and moral community of relations grounded in the land through participatory kin-based inter-generational interactions, is what I have come to understand as important practices of social repairing in rural contemporary post-war contexts. The return to the land, and to village life under customary tenure, thus had the strength and power to re-orient social relations away from the defining, categorical effects of violence experienced during the years of war and displacement. In the substantive chapters of this thesis, I attend to these practices, as I came to learn them through various methodologies in my time in the Padibe sub-counties.
1.6 Chapter Outlines

Before fully exploring the specific practices that I learned were important to social repair in these post-conflict contexts, I first begin by situating myself within the study. Chapter 2 “Research as Relationship” interrogates my own positionality in studying a community’s response to war and displacement that is not my own, and I turn to scholarship on indigenous research paradigms and methodologies that challenge me to grapple with the ethical dimensions of researching with peoples who have suffered various violences, including colonization, and who continue to suffer from its enduring manifestations.

Discussing this reflexivity as carrying “generative doubt”, I then examine how my research questions, methods, framework, and outputs emerged from and privilege my long-term relationships in the area, and detail my own history in Northern Uganda. I then discuss how my interests in tekwaro pa Acoli and learning how to live in the village engendered interactions that led to embodied and experiential lessons regarding relatedness that cultivated a research ethos that valorizes responsibilities, “obligation”, and accountability.

Support for a youth group’s project on “cultural revival”, the co-creation of a workbook with the Pabwoc sub-clan/village about their tekwaro, and a village survey, complicated and complemented living and participating in everyday village life. Applying ideas explored here in the introduction regarding learning and the creation of knowledge, I consider how recounting my interactions with individuals and communities over the years in Acoliland is important in acknowledging how the knowledge offered in this dissertation was itself created through participatory interactions between myself and my generous teachers in
Pabwoc and in the Padibe sub-counties. I thus contemplate my practice as “research as relationship.”

Chapter 3, “Ancestral Land”, primarily sets up and examines the main idiom of relatedness in Acoli as ancestral land (ngom kwaro). I first detail the remembered deep history of one village to show how the village lands provide an anchor (Carsten 2007:7, Hutchins 2005) for historical and contemporary kinship relations and kin-based communal governance. I then provide a description of everyday village life as it was in 2012. Recounting the recent history of that same village/sub-clan through wartime and displacement, I conclude by exploring how the contemporary practices of Acoli work (tic Acoli) necessary for a successful return to subsistence farming life on ancestral land engages different generations in tekwaro. And how these engagements provoke a participatory relatedness that constitutes social repairing despite the fragmenting effects of violence experienced during the war years.

Chapter 4 “Respect” is the second substantive chapter and explores the importance of the notion of respect (woro) to relatedness in Acoli. Examining village debates and focus group discussions, I explore why traditional courtship (cuna) was repeatedly linked with woro, and why people widely believe that cuna was the most important practice relating to tekwaro affected by the war and life in the camps. Detailing historical cuna practices, I show how aspects of so-called “traditional” courtship processes activate a range of inter-generational interactions with tekwaro that both guides assumptions and serves to
negotiate local ideas of gendered and generational personhood, and rural kin-based communal governance, rooted in the land. I then turn to contemporary examples of couples’ engagement with *cuna* practices and issues to contemplate how these sites work to create and re-create relatedness, and thus perform social repairing in rural Padibe sub-counties.

Chapter 5 “The Sub-clan”, is the third and final substantive chapter and attends to how responsibilities concerned with *kaka* (here, the sub-clan) anchored in the land, are vital to relatedness in contemporary contexts. Referencing a murder that occurred during my fieldwork, I explore the implications of the sub-clan as an interdependent, communal or “corporate” entity, and acknowledge contemporary performances of sub-clan identity and unity as promulgating indigenous Acoli law, rooted in the land. In regards to the most recent war’s unprecedented “Acholi-on Acholi violence” (Oloyo 2013:7), I explore why most violence committed during the war is “bracketed away” from everyday life, social relations, and their organization. Finally turning to the creation of a sub-clan based non-profit foundation, and the writing of its constitution as an inter-generational process of social repair, I examine this practice whereby active negotiation and renegotiation of *tekwaro*, and thus its transmission and learning, are perhaps most obviously at work.

The concluding chapter emphasizes that attending to conceptualizations of relatedness to understand social repair allows for a valorization of contemporary inter-generational practices as sites of interaction that enact relational learning experiences. These learning
experiences of and with tekwaro, indigenous knowledge, are constitutive of social repair because of how they re-elaborate relatedness by provoking engagement and participation in people’s social, political, and moral communities. I emphasize how a return to the land, and the system of land tenure, is thus capable of re-gathering, or re-membering individuals as community in post-conflict contexts. The remaking of social relations made possible by the land, and land tenure systems, is a contribution to studies of lives during and after war and upheaval because of how it privileges conceptions and practices of relatedness in refusing the defining, fragmenting, un-relatednessing power of violence on social relations. Suggestions for further research on community initiatives regarding land rights and conflict follows, and I conclude with a reflection on the personal impact of the study.

1.7 Conclusion

I began this introductory chapter by talking about the seeds of social repair, and how those seeds can be found, in surprising places, and in perhaps, to those outside, unlikely circumstance and practice, such as grinding grain or ants foraging and storing their food. Then, focusing on people’s pervasive concerns with tekwaro, indigenous knowledge, and inter-generational relations in the immediate post-war period, I attended to why tekwaro was being used to refer to post-war and post-displacement concerns, rather than bringing LRA perpetrators to justice or holding Government accountable for the camps, as was frequently explored in academic and policy writings at that time. Considering other recent work on youth in conditions of war and displacement, I show that the community’s angst around indigenous knowledge belies astute observation of war’s impact on knowledge
transmissions and social organization generally, and on established transitions to adulthood and attachment to community specifically.

Sketching my conceptualizations of how communities “move on” after war as a form of “social repair” then provides an overview of the concept, and explains how inquiring into social repair practices is well suited to center the community’s apprehension regarding tekwaro and inter-generational relations in post-conflict contexts. Emphasizing the importance of land, and land tenure, to people’s practices of social repair, I assert that the research results reorient questions of repair away from the specific experiences of violence to re-elaborating relatedness and everyday social organization that secures subsistence. A brief project description (which will be expanded upon in the next chapter), including my research questions, then contextualizes the study’s main learnings. I then turn to the work of Okot p’Bitek, who conceives of tekwaro as social philosophy, relatedness, and practice, and build a theoretical framework that allows a processual, relational, practice-based approach to tekwaro that privileges indigenous models of relatedness to understand contemporary instances of social repair. A chapter overview follows, and shows how the three substantive chapters of this dissertation explore the land as an idiom and material anchor of relatedness that provides the impetus and structure for inter-generational interactions with tekwaro that are necessary for the rebuilding of social, political, and moral community.
After over ten years of visiting, speaking with, eating with, dancing with, skype-ing with, and living with people in Acoliland, Northern Uganda, I have learnt much from them about war, displacement, and the role of land, family, sharing, responsibilities, and indigenous knowledge in “moving on”, in social repair, in making home living again. I cannot easily communicate the breadth, nor the depth of what has been taught to me, yet I try here, in some way, to pass on some of that knowledge.

Figure 11- *Wang oo. Pabwoc, 2012.*
Photo by Ryan Gauvin, reproduced here with his permission.
Chapter 2: Research As Relationship-Ethos and Methodologies

2.1 Introduction–Obligation

I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork while living in Pabwoc East Village in 2012. Although I usually stayed within the village, I also traveled by bicycle (30 mins.) or by foot (75 mins.) to Padibe Town Center sometimes to visit friends and acquaintances. Something significant happened my second week there. It was the dry season, and I was preparing to bicycle to the center early, before the heat settled in. After waking, washing up, exchanging greetings with my host family and passers-by, and sharing a little breakfast, I was getting ready to leave the homestead when Auntie Santina looked me up and down, buttoned my shirt a little higher, and told me that my shoes were dirty, and that I had to put on clean ones (I was 38 years old in 2012). I kind of shrugged, intending to obey, but also added that I would probably get dirty from all the dust on the road anyways. She replied that I was now a part of Pabwoc, and as a daughter of Bwoc had to represent them well outside of the village. In any case, the proper Acoli word to use in response was ayubo (I will arrange, fix it)–and not to talk back. Iwinyo?–she asked if I heard and understood. Awinyo–I replied as I stooped back inside the house to change my shoes.

Growing up I did not think about how my behavior and choices reflected on my family. I am a daughter of divorced, middle class, Jewish Ashkenazi parents from Montreal, Canada (or what is now known as such), who always felt like an individual, and while close to my small extended family, I certainly did not ever think on how wearing dirty shoes might affect them. This very ordinary interaction and moment marked a distinct shift for me, and
throughout my fieldwork and up until the present, I reflect on what being a hosted “daughter of Bwoc” means, both in terms of ethical engagement as a researcher, and of my perceived responsibilities, and thus “obligation”, in both personal and professional capacities.

Thinking through these responsibilities and “obligation” necessarily contributes to my inchoate considerations of research and relationship that coalesce in thinking through my positionality within Northern Uganda. Who I am—as Antonius Robben and Carolyn Nordstrom frame it (1995:11)—as a historical product, and as a nexus and network of privilege? While “good-willed” anthropologists have long engaged in research on social inequality and violence, it is, as Victoria Sanford points out, “the very unequal power relations produced by wealth that enable anthropologists to travel the world and carry out research” (2006:6). Yet, if scholars see inequality and injustice, however much they are already implicated in it, do they not still have a responsibility to engage with, think through, and speak out (or write out) against injustice? (Scheper-Hughes 1992). While I do not have definitive answers to these questions, I forefront here my responsibilities and “obligation” to Pabwoc to actively reflect on my research practice and methodologies, and to recognize, call out, and question the intellectual practice of what Paulette Regan calls “the colonizer who lurks within” (2010:11).

I try to begin this process here by acknowledging that I have a particular set of life circumstances, experiences, and relationships—like the people whose histories and
experiences I recount here—that led me to study social repair in rural Northern Uganda. I believe that discussing these particularities are important, in identifying biases, acknowledging interests, and in thinking through the very personal and political questions of research ethics and methodologies.

I will begin by considering my identity—both my Jewish familial histories of violence and displacement, and my own history as a white Anthropologist. I then turn to scholarship on indigenous research paradigms and methodologies that nurtures “generative doubt”, and that highlights the unequal structures of power and privilege that allows, conceptualizes, and facilitates research amongst peoples who suffer as a result of those same networks of power and privilege. I then think through my experiences in Northern Uganda until the present, and engage with these considerations by foregrounding my relationships with various people in the area over time. I contemplate how my relationships, and perceived responsibilities through those relationships, have led me to ask certain questions, including the research questions outlined in the introduction. I then discuss the various research methodologies that were specifically used in this study—as a result of my relationships, as well as in consideration of my positionality. Exploring research as relationship, I emphasize how relational indigenous Acoli modes of knowing and learning, of what Ocitti (1973) calls an “Acoli indigenous education”, particularly through my engagement with relational

29 Locke et al. (2008) discuss the idea of doubt in the research process and its underappreciated significance for the theorizing process, but I engage with the idea in terms of the reflexivity that it provokes.
responsibilities and "obligation", are essential to both my methodologies and theoretical understandings of social repair in rural Acoliland today.

2.2 Being Me in Acoliland

My own familial history with war, and my Jewish heritage has proven to be a fascinating and recurring topic of conversation in Acoliland in regard to people’s experiences of Colonialism, Christian conversion, and war. From queries concerning how “my” people rebuilt and became strong after the holocaust (personal conversation with Paramount Chief Rwot Acana 2005), to comments on the “stubbornness” of my people to repeatedly not accept Christianity (personal conversation with Father David 2007), to an observation that my people have managed better than the Acoli to “not convert”, and keep our “religion and culture one” (personal conversation with elder 2012), engagement about my own history and culture with friends and acquaintances in Northern Uganda have over the years progressively served as a critical tool for self-awareness and introspection. What has been less obvious, and also less discussed in Acoliland however, has been my history as a middle-class white Canadian, entangled in the representational politics and power of media productions (film and photography) and academic institutions.

There is a passage from Chinua Achebe’s novel “Things Fall Apart” that I continuously return to because of the generative doubt it evokes. It is at the very end of the book, the last paragraph, when the Colonial official sees Okwonko dead from suicide, swinging from the

30 My maternal grandmother and grandfather were World War II holocaust survivors.
tree. He had come to arrest Okonkwo for slaying one of his messengers, who had come to disperse a clan meeting to discuss possible solidarity and resistance to Colonial rule.

As he walked back to the court he (the Colonial official) thought about his book.

Every day brought him some new material. The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could perhaps write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was so much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of his book, after much thought

*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger.* (1959:191)

This paragraph, conjuring extreme doubt, serves as a kind of warning and touchstone for my research work. It at once sums up the dangers and hubris of the researcher, while calling into question the fundamental political impetus behind someone’s involvement in a culture, community, and society that is not their own. It also explicitly calls out the detachment, or dis-engagement, from people’s life worlds and knowledge, *from the details*, and condemns research work and academic writing as a dangerous sham, and even as a kind of “cover” for violent political and economic relations. Similar to Spivak (1998), Harding (1991) and many others’ assertions, Achebe asserts here that research and representation are never value-free and are irrevocably entangled with politics and power.31

31 I first read Achebe’s book in 1991, long before I ever visited Northern Uganda, but re-read it again for my comprehensive exams in 2011, before the major fieldwork for this research project. Since that time, I have tried to nurture the doubt—to carry it with me and to make it generative—and have
Another strong voice of cultivating doubt in this regard has been from Acoli writer and scholar Okot p’Bitek. Writing at the end of British Colonial rule in Uganda, p’Bitek attended Oxford’s Anthropology Department, and was disgusted by the terms used. He charged that “barbarian”, “savage”, “primitive”, “tribe”, “non-literate”, and “developing”, as examples, powerfully, even if subconsciously, posit the society and culture of the researcher (or missionary, or Colonial official, etc.) as better; condoning imperialist, colonialist, and post-colonialist subjugation of whole swathes of the global population (2011). He especially critiques the discipline of Anthropology itself, saying:

Social anthropology has been the study of non-Western societies by Western scholars to serve Western interests. Social anthropology has not only been the handmaiden of colonialism in that it has analyzed and provided important information about the social institutions of colonized peoples to ensure efficient and effective control and exploitation, it has also furnished and elaborated the myth of the “primitive” which justified the colonial enterprise. (2011:1, 1st edition 1971)

Although the issue of whether Anthropology was a handmaiden of colonialism, and the ways that colonial categories of knowledge “constituted colonized peoples as an object of study and control in the service of state power” (Cole 2001:18) has been specifically debated within the discipline since p’Bitek’s very warranted attack in 1971 (see Asad 1973 tried to critically work with this doubt to guide my methodological, theoretical, and personal engagements.
and Lewis 2014 as examples), I take his charge seriously. Considering what Sherry Ortner (1999:987) has described as “anthropology's complicity in projects of power”, I try to nurture this doubt, and carry it with me, as I think about and practice my research work.

I continue to think through how my work in the Padibe sub-counties might be, despite my efforts, horrifically conforming to an ultimately neo-colonial model. I worry if my urge to learn, and to then disseminate the findings of that learning, to “tell a different story” of repair, however much backed by responsibilities and obligations to the community, about how some people recover from war and the protection of land rights, might ultimately lead to someone else’s capacity to exert greater control and subjugation over the individuals and communities I engaged with. I am concerned that I, like some of those who undoubtedly used the terms “primitive” and “savage”, am subconsciously and unwittingly strengthening and reproducing the very structures of oppression that I seek to write against.

I struggle with these questions, with this doubt. One day in 2014 when attending a conference in Osoyoos, British Columbia, entitled *Truth(s), Indigenous Peoples and Public Policy*, I was discussing the idea of social repair with a small group of interested scholars, lawyers, and community leaders. Particularly, I engaged a man, a First Nation’s elder and leader, with the issue of whether documenting community indigenous knowledge and practice, and then writing to and detailing those practices, was a potentially dangerous activity considering the enduring power relations inherent in the academic research
endeavour. He looked at me thoughtfully, and finally said that to him, it was very important that I should write these things, as it is important to have a record that shows that, in opposition to what has been written throughout the history of research, communities themselves have the knowledge and capacity to organize, manage, and deal with their own life-worlds. And that respect should be given to that knowledge and that capacity.

I take what this elder said that day seriously, but I also listen to the constant whispers of Achebe and p’Bitek.32 While I would love to fully embrace my work as possibly “corrective” to some of the more oppressive historical and continuing grand-narratives, I also carry doubt–doubt that has been fruitfully nurtured by contemporary Indigenous scholarship that elaborates on the political and representational power of the research endeavour itself.

Many indigenous scholars in critique of–yet continued engagement with–Western academic practices attempt to outline the possibilities of a fairer, more transparent, and more accountable Indigenous research paradigm (Smith 1999, Wilson 2008, Kovach 2009). Like Achebe’s novel and p’Bitek’s writing, Linda Tuhiwai Smith clearly states that Western academic practices “…regulate and realize an underlying code of imperialism and colonialism” (1999:7). Emphasizing that “research is not an innocent or distant academic

32 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o is also influential, especially in acknowledging how Colonialism’s effects are long-term, profound, and affects all aspects of the person, particularly how the imposition of a foreign language itself “colonizes the mind” (1986). As is Kwasi Wiredu, who writes about the need for conceptual decolonization, for “disentangling African frameworks of thought from colonial impositions…” (2011:xxxvii).
exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (Smith 1999:5), contemporary critical indigenous scholarship calls for self-reflexivity and self-evaluation when engaging in the practice of research.

For many, including Bagele Chilisa (who writes specifically about African Indigenous Research Methodologies), it is about active de-colonization of the research process itself. She says that this can primarily be done by acknowledging and valorizing other forms of knowledge and knowing that can challenge western academic hegemony, and thus western power. She urges us to remember that “social science research needs to improve spirituality in research, respecting communal forms of living that are not Western and creating space for inquiries based on relational realities and forms of knowing that are predominant among the non-Western Other/s still being colonized” (2012:3).

Eva Marie Garrotte’s own ideas of de-colonization, of a formulation of a radical Indigenism (2003), argues for the reassertion and rebuilding of traditional knowledge from its roots as a way to assert an American Indian scholarship. Beginning from indigenous philosophies of knowledge requires that the researcher work within the assumptions drawn from indigenous philosophies, and not from Western academic theories. These kinds of assertions and visions resonate quite clearly back to Okot p’Bitek again—to his calls for “post-colonial” Africa to be re-built from African traditions. Not urging a simplistic “return” to traditions, he urges instead for cultivating the values and teachings—the knowledge of
African peoples themselves—rather than the cultures and philosophies of the colonizers (p'Bitek 1973).

As elaborated in the introduction, I have learnt from, and employ Okot p'Bitek's thoughts as the foundation of my theoretical framework, and attempt to ground the various facets of the current study (research questions, methodologies, analysis) firmly within Acoli indigenous knowledge. And, as explored in the introduction, I use Janet Carsten's notion of relatedness, of understanding indigenous concepts of what being related does, to precisely acknowledge and respect “other” ways of being and acting, and of knowing, in the world. My urge to study the inter-generational angst around Acoli tekwaro itself indicates my concern with the gravity with which these “non-dominant” kinds of knowledge, relationality, and actions are conceptualized and approached by the community itself.

In addition to acknowledging the impact of my Jewishness on the research, and how my “Whiteness” and the resulting generative doubt has led me to a more conscious and continuous centering of Acoli indigenous scholarship, knowledge, and learning, I also seek to support a general Afrocentric approach (Asante 2003, Dei 1994, Mkabela 2005). An Afrocentric approach, or paradigm (Mazama 2001) centers Africans’ own concerns, initiatives, and knowledge to secure and advance their social, cultural, economic, and

33 Please see Rosenoff Gauvin (2013) for an article in which I detailed Okot p'Bitek's substantial, yet overlooked, contributions to the study of oral tradition.

34 Molefi Kete Asante was the first to develop the term Afrocentricity into a philosophical concept, in his work that sought to re-center the place of African knowledge and experience in Africans’ lives (2003, originally published in 1988). Along with Ama Mazama, who wrote extensively on the paradigm, they are known as the “Temple School.”
political rights. As Asante himself explains, “one of the key assumptions of the Afrocentrist is that all relationships are based on centers and margins and the distances from either the center or the margin. When black people view themselves as centered and central in their own history then they see themselves as agents, actors, and participants rather than as marginals on the periphery of political or economic experience” (Asante 2009). This at once corresponds to my responsibilities to Pabwoc, and highlights their own capacities and practices, and needs for secure land rights recognitions, to “move on” after the recent war and displacement. Although their own capacities and practices may, at some point, involve utilizing national or international justice or development frameworks for achieving their goals, these are framed from the perspectives, needs, and aspirations that emerge from the communities’ themselves. As George Sefa Dei explains:

The notion of Afrocentricity...asserts both that African indigenous cultural values, traditions, mythology, and history may be understood as a body of knowledge dealing with the social world, and that Afrocentricity is an alternative, nonexclusionary, and nonhegemonic system of knowledge informed by African peoples’ histories and experiences. Afrocentricity is about the investigation and understanding of phenomena from a perspective grounded in African-centered values. It is about the validation of African experiences and histories, as well as a critique of the continued exclusion and marginalization of African knowledge systems from educational texts, mainstream academic knowledge, and scholarship. (1994:4-5)
Despite learning from the teachings of these scholars, and despite my consequent efforts, desires, ethics, and epistemological stances, the results of my learning (and the circumstances of it), and the forms in which I am obliged to express it here, still implicates me in powerful hierarchies of knowledge that continue to acknowledge some forms of knowing and deny and silence others. I have, however, tried to the best of my ability at this point in time to mitigate and disrupt these kinds of violences, as I will review in the rest of the chapter, and as I hope is manifest in the dissertation document itself. The ethos that has come to frame my efforts in these regards, and that has come to frame my research practice, is to acknowledge the people of Pabwoc and Padibe as my great teachers, lapwonye madongo, to be accountable to the community of Pabwoc, to be responsible to them, and to be “obligated” to them, in my theory, methods, and practice, as much as I am able.

So how did a white, Jewish Ashkenazi, female Anthropologist end up changing her shoes to better conform to her “obligation” to Pabwoc sub-clan and village one hot, dusty March morning? And how is the changing of my shoes demonstrative of my engagement with difficult questions, and the generative doubt concerning an ethical and respectful research practice? The next section will further explore my own position and relation within the political and social conditions of the work by briefly recounting my involvement in Northern Uganda over the past decade. Recounting my experiences over the years, I trace how I have come to think of my research practice as relationship, and why responsibilities

35I owe much of my attempt to tackle these issues to Pilar Riaño-Alcalá.
and obligation are key to understanding the ethos of this study. A description of specific methodologies that were used follows, and I explore how my growing responsibilities towards my interlocutors, and the various relationships initiated and maintained in Acoliland over the years, have led to the co-creation of the knowledge expressed here. I conclude by discussing research as relationship.

2.2.1 2004: When the sun sets…

I arrived in Northern Uganda for the first time in September 2004, when I was invited by Mindset Media to be part of a Canadian production team to make a film about the war (McKormack 2006). I was a documentary photographer at the time, and also worked as an assistant location manager in the fiction film industry in Montreal. The position was voluntary, but expenses, including film for photography were paid. The field team included a fixer (Mike Otim), one researcher (Dr. Erin Baines), a producer (Tim Hardy), two cameramen (Vince Arvidson and Chris Wayatt), and myself. Upon receiving the invitation to participate by telephone, my first response was to say yes, of course, but as I hung up the phone, I thought “f%#@- what war in Northern Uganda?” I began research, and first came across an IRIN report called “When the Sun Sets, We Start to Worry…” (2003). I read the descriptions of the brutal abductions and forced fighting of young people, the intense poverty and disease as a result of internal displacement, as well as stories about escape and of youth night-commuting to city centers every night to protect themselves. These stories reminded me of my grandmother’s stories from World War II’s holocaust–the suffering was enormous. I was ashamed that I did not know about this war.
When I was growing up, people said that the world did not know about the horrors of the Holocaust and that millions, including my forefathers and foremothers, were being exterminated. I believed this at that time and thought incredulously that if people had known, the slaughter might have been stopped sooner. This is partially why I chose to do a BA in communication studies, and believed in the rational witnessing public and media’s potential for social change. Although my thinking has since evolved regarding documentary and social change (Rosenoff 2010), at that time I felt that I had to be a part of telling more people about this war—there was not much doubt.

The film crew and I arrived in Northern Uganda at a tense time—when Joseph Kony, leader of the LRA, was “back” in Uganda from South Sudan. We worked with Gulu NGO Forum director Mike Otim, and convened an Acoli advisory board of community based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to suggest topics that they wanted to communicate about the war that they were experiencing (this advisory board eased the limit of my “doubt” at that time). We also had a media permit, and were able to travel with WFP’s food aid convoys to the displacement camps outside of Gulu town. It was unsafe to drive to Kitgum or Pader districts,36 but we flew to Kitgum for a week where we negotiated safe travel on military convoy through the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Lapolo, at that time. There was a lot of fighting on the outskirts of

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36 The two other districts that along with Gulu, made up Acoliland at that time. Since the end of the war in late 2006, Government has created four more districts, which encompass Acoliland, or the “Acholi Sub-region.”
Kitgum town, across the Pager River to the north of town, and we heard gunshots from the hotel at night. We witnessed thousands of children night commuting into Gulu and Kitgum town centers for protection. Ambushes on the roads in broad daylight were frequent, and we came across one right near Padibe on our way to Lukung with the RDC’s convoy one day. We attended the funeral of the man we found killed on the roadside that day. We also visited many IDP camps where residents both showed and told us about the oppressive overcrowding, hunger, disease, and the lack of water and sanitation facilities. We met women in hot dark huts who had been beaten and raped by both the Government’s military and the LRA. We met adults and children who had been burned inside their huts by the LRA. We met community groups and mothers who were desperately trying to help youth who had been abducted and managed to escape. We visited Mega FM radio station in Gulu, and watched as former abductees were called upon to try to convince “rebels” in the bush to come home. We played with, sang, and danced the Macarena with hundreds of children we encountered on our camp visits. We did and saw a lot on that first trip, and I took photos, with permission, of all I witnessed.

Conversations, in addition to images of violence from that first visit, continued to haunt me and provoke doubt. Particularly one from a rainy day up in Palaro IDP camp. I met Samuel, a 45 year-old man, while he was waiting for food aid. It was pouring rain, and I was trying to take pictures of the long lines of people waiting. He started talking to me, in perfect English, and exclaimed that it was unbelievable that with so much fertile land, his people were forced into the humiliating act of begging for food. A conversation ensued about life
before the war and camps, about Acoli self-reliance, and he commented that Acoli even used to get the best secondary school scores in the country. Thinking about my taking pictures, he wondered aloud why “when someone is killed in Palestine or Israel, it is all over the news, yet here, where hundreds and thousands are dying, we are never mentioned? Do we not count?” (personal communication 2004).

Remembering conversations like these helped me to finally develop my slide film, despite the doubt, and I set about editing the images. Finding a sense of purpose, I scanned, dusted, and printed images in preparation for a photo exhibit, titled “Who’s Counting?” a few months later (Rosenoff 2005). I found a gallery to show the work, was present in the gallery throughout the weeks of exhibition for interactions, and conducted many television and print media interviews on the subject. Although I questioned my qualifications to discuss the complex conflict, I tried to the best of my ability.

At the exhibit’s opening, an old photography professor of mine excitedly asked me “which war are you going to go to next”? But I was speechless, my face flushed and I could not answer. I could not conceive of moving on to a “next” war. While I did not imagine myself as a war photographer, I still did not know what I was, in relation to the Northern Ugandan war, and in relation to the people I had met there.

37 The actual film was being edited in Vancouver at this time.
38 I was in contact with an Acoli woman studying at McGill University at that time, however, when I asked her if she could speak about the war with, or instead of me to the media, she declined saying that she feared the Ugandan Government.
I used the rest of my savings and bought a ticket to return to Northern Uganda in February 2005.

2.2.2 2005: “Roco Wat i Acoli” (Restoring relations in Acoli)

I needed a military permit to travel around Northern Uganda this time, and visited Major Shaban Bantariza, the Military Public Relations Officer in Bomba, with Erin Baines and Mike Otim to obtain our passes. I soon traveled with Erin up to Gulu town, and tagged along and took photos while she and the rest of her research team carried out interviews and visits for a study that was summarized in the report “Roco Wat I Acoli - Restoring Relationships in Acholi-land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration” (JRP et al. 2005).39

I traveled with the team to camps in Gulu District, where the displaced residents showed me around the camps while the team conducted focus group interviews. I also traveled with the research team to Kitgum district, by road this time, and attended group cleansing ceremonies presided over by Rwot David Onen Acana II, Rwot of Payira clan who was also installed as Acoli Paramount Chief in January 2005. I also attended one young woman’s “traditional” cleansing ceremony in Lacor, near Gulu town, which was organized by a formerly abducted young woman’s family. My understandings of Acoli community and capacity grew, and I could not help acknowledging that the theoretical and moral frames

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39 At its inception in 2005, JRP—the Justice and Reconciliation Project—was a partnership between the Gulu District NGO Forum and the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. In January 2010, JRP became an independent non-governmental organization (NGO) under Ugandan registration, with support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kampala.
with which I understood violence and reconciliation and justice (trauma, holding perpetrators responsible for violence, Western judicial mechanisms), especially in relation to my own family’s histories thereof, were woefully inadequate to the communities I had visited.\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{2.2.3 2006-2008: After the cease-fire}

I had again saved enough money working a contract as an assistant location manager to return to Northern Uganda in late 2006. There had been a cease-fire in September of that year, and I was able to arrange, with the help of the Justice and Reconciliation Project and Caritas,\textsuperscript{41} to stay in Padibe IDP camp in what was then Kitgum District.\textsuperscript{42} I was particularly struck with how much NGO activity was based in and around Gulu town compared with other places I had visited, namely the northern part of Kitgum district (where Padibe is, in what is now Lamwo District), and wondered how people’s experiences of war and displacement differed in outlying areas.

I wanted to begin a new documentary photo project about everyday life in the IDP camps, and I also wanted to understand what the cease-fire really meant for over a million displaced people.

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{40} Despite this uncertainty, when I returned home I put together a website with the entire photo essay, and voluntarily took part in an advocacy campaign planned by the film’s producer (Act For Stolen Children), which included showing the photographs at a meeting in New York City that gathered NGOs, politician, and academics working on Northern Uganda, and participating in a news conference at the United Nations. I also put all the images on DVDs and sent them to local civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs in Gulu town (through Mike Otim) for their own use.
\textsuperscript{41} A friend had contacts with Caritas, and they had contacted the priest at Padibe Mission.
\textsuperscript{42} I also received permission from the RDC of Kitgum to stay in the camp at that time.\end{flushleft}
I stayed in the Roman Catholic priests’ (Acoli priests) house at Padibe Mission in Padibe IDP camp for the end of 2006, and the first two and a half weeks of January 2007. Padibe IDP camp at that time (2006-7) was still full with a population of 35 000 (UNOCHA 2006), as people did not yet trust the cease-fire of four months before.

An employee of JRP in Padibe named Christopher43 first introduced me to Aceng Beatrice (hereafter Beatrice), a young woman of 15. Although I met other young women in the camp, I decided to learn from and document Beatrice’s everyday life that January 2007. Beatrice, whose father had been killed by cattle raiders and whose mother died of AIDS, was taking care of her three brothers, and spent her days fetching firewood, carrying jerry cans of water, washing clothes and dishes, and cooking. I kept her company and helped her get mud to re-smear her hut, washed dishes, and picked otigo leaves off the stems. I will not describe too much from that time as I have already written and presented art about her experiences of abduction, escape, and survival in the camp (Rosenoff 2009, Rosenoff 2010, Rosenoff 2010a). However, what is vital to the current study is that my experiences with Beatrice first introduced me to the rhythms of everyday life and relationality in the camps. What survival itself entails in the everyday, and the extensive networks of social relations that makes survival possible, looked very different than the dominant narratives told of the war. The sharing of heirloom seeds between camp kinsmen and neighbours, for example,

43 Whom I eventually found out in 2012, was a resident of Pabwoc.
demonstrates a very different view of survivor agency than only waiting in long lines for food aid.

Figure 12- Aceng Beatrice shares seeds with her camp neighbours. Padibe IDP Camp, 2007.

Figure 13- Aceng Beatrice waits in line with her brother to collect food rations from the WFP. Padibe IDP Camp, 2007.

Also, I first met Augustine, who acted as research assistant for the current project, at this time. He was a high school seminary student, home in Padibe during the holiday break,
staying within the Mission area. He offered me his friendship and eventually introduced me to his family that lived in the camp.

Figure 14- Nyero Augustine Caesar, Padibe Boys School. Padibe IDP Camp, 2008.

He had so many brothers and sisters, and aunties, and father’s brothers, and people who were “like a father” or “like a sister” that I could not keep up. Little did I know how much a part of my life they would eventually become.

After that first chunk of time with Beatrice, and Augustine, I began to wonder more about documentary photography’s (and my own) role in politics, and in advocacy, and in social change more generally. I began to think more about how events like “war on the African continent” are framed, how they are narrated, and by whom they are narrated, and I decided to apply to a new MFA program at Ryerson University in Documentary Media so that I could more seriously think through these issues.
While academics had begun to write about social repair and emphasized the agentic, relational, and generative aspects of lives in and after war (see introduction section 1.4), contemporary media and art representations, as they were critiqued, too often participated in the commodification of suffering (Strauss 1998), of condoning and generating complacency (Sontag 2003, Moeller 1999), of aestheticizing suffering (Reinhardt et al. 2007, Solomon-Godeau 1991), and of “othering”—participating in neo-colonial, imperial discourse and policy that encouraged the representation of Africans, or non-white peoples, in need of saving by white Westerners.44 I re-examined the photo essay I had created in 2004-2005, and critically saw how my naïve necessity to “tell people about the war”, even though I heeded local peoples’ choices of what to tell (through the advisory committee), still contributed to stereotypical images of African suffering in need of foreign alleviation. The details and complexity of the war, including its Colonial roots (Baines 2015a, Branch 2011, Finnström 2008), the military involvement of multiple African and Western nations which fueled the war, and NGOs’ complicity in disseminating a one-sided pro-Government narrative of the war (Finnström 2008, Dolan 2009, Porter 2013) all contributed to my growing doubt, and “unsettling” (Regan 2010) of my role as a can-do-good messenger demanding more outside action to alleviate suffering.

44 Teju Cole particularly explores the “White Saviour Industrial Complex” later in 2012, in response to Invisible Children’s Kony 2012 viral video.
The unsettling, however, could not be contended with by not engaging in these difficult questions. The people I’ve met, the stories shared, and my experiences during and concerning my time in Northern Uganda fundamentally changed who I am, and how I see the world. And it is from these questions of representation—of narration of war and survival itself—and my role within the global system that creates and perpetuates war, that I began to engage. Swedenburg describes how when he tells people about the work he does with Palestinian youth, “most people respond with looks of shocked disbelief and exaggerated compassion (both for him and the Palestinians) but rarely with the realization that the “state of emergency” connects to their own lives” (1995:34). I thought that if academics, like Swedenburg, sought ways to respectfully represent lives in war—or at least engage in the issues to advance understanding—and engage with his own involvement therein, I could also seek ways in which to bring respect and acknowledgement to peoples’ everyday acts of survival and resistance through critical and self-reflexive documentary practice.

Three months after I began the MFA program, I went back to Padibe. I contacted one of the priests from Padibe when I got up to Gulu, and received permission to visit once again. When I arrived at the mission in Padibe IDP camp, the same three local priests were there, and Augustine was around too. Augustine had left seminary school at this point, but he stayed around the mission, involved in the church choir, and having set up a chicken business near the Fathers’ house. He was trying to raise extra funds to be able to attend Gulu University.
My first morning there, I set out to find Beatrice. The camp was a little less crowded, but was still very full. Augustine helped me find my way to Beatrice’s old hut. Although it is a long story, Beatrice had a falling out with her brother and moved in with a more distant relative on the other side of the camp. She recounted the story to me full of tears, and speaking softly, whispered that she really missed her brothers.

The next day, she asked me to join her in harvesting peas about a 40 minute walk from the camp. After harvesting, we visited some of her maternal relatives, back in their “home” (another 30 minute walk), a small clearing with two houses in a large sea of tall grass. She gave them two large sacks of peas, while they questioned me about home, my parents, and my life loko nam (across the sea).

Figure 15- Aceng Beatrice’s extended maternal family’s homestead. Panyinga, December 2007.

They had recently returned to their ancestral lands.
A few days later, Beatrice, quite hesitantly, told me that she was pregnant. The father was in jail, but she was confident that when he got out they would live together on his land. I asked why she did not go live with the relatives I had met in the bush, but she explained to me that in Acoli, a woman lives together with her husband on his land (patrilocal). So she would wait.

Soon after, she explained that she had to leave Padibe for a day. I was worried that I had done something to offend her, but she said that her uncles had asked her to help cook at a sub-clan meeting. I asked what the meeting was about, and she said that she thinks it is about returning to the ancestral land (dwog ngom kwaro), but that she wasn’t so sure.

While my relationships until now had mostly been with seemingly unrelated individuals (Beatrice, Augustine, people I had met in 2004 and 2005 etc.), I began to learn more about the multiple affiliations and attending responsibilities, based on lineage, sub-clan, and clan that existed in Padibe. It is as if webs of relations that I almost grasped over the years were coming into focus. Being introduced to people over the years that were “like a father” or “like a sister” finally began to make its way into my thick head.

Later, I even learned that Beatrice’s mother was from the same clan as Augustine’s mother. They used classificatory kinship terms whereby, for example, all of your father’s brothers are fathers, and all of your father’s brother’s children are your brothers and sisters. Classificatory kinship terms in Acoli are best understood in terms of the obligations and responsibilities of “amity” (Fortes 1969) implied in the relationship designated by the term in question. This will be more fully explored in Chapter 5.
I left to finish my MFA course work in Toronto, and then returned to Padibe IDP camp five months later in late June with Andrea McKinlay. Andrea and I lived next door to Augustine’s family in the camp this time, and his mother looked out for us and taught us how to live. Acan Almarina (Mama) showed us how to start a fire, prepare Acoli greens, cook on the firewood, collect water, sweep the house etc.

Figure 16- Acan Almarina (Mama) shows us how to light the cooking fire. Padibe IDP camp, 2008.

My plane ticket was sponsored by Guluwalk this time, a Canadian non-profit. Along with one of their employees, Andrea McKinlay, I was to write a blog about living in Padibe IDP camp. The purpose was to bring attention to the plight of those still remaining in the camp, and to garner support for much needed reconstruction aid and development to the war-torn area (Rosenoff and McKinlay 2008). We hired Augustine as a fixer, and asked him to find us a place to live within the camp and to help us secure permissions from the camp and local governments. We also received permission from the RDC of Kitgum District, and requested that Ojibu, a JRP employee, and Augustine, upload our entries from Kitgum town. There were still no “internet sticks” or electricity in Padibe at that time. Every two days, Andrea and I would walk to the father’s house, about 20 minutes from the grass thatched roof house we rented in the camp center. We kept a laptop there (there was solar power) that we used to type the blog entry and we transferred it onto a usb key. Augustine or Ojibu would then travel by motorcycle to an Internet café in Kitgum to try to upload the post.
I also visited Beatrice a lot. She now lived with her baby’s father, Kilama Amos, and her son, Vita Kissumu, about ten minutes from the hut rented by Andrea and I. Beatrice and Kilama were still living in the camp, but they were building a house on Kilama’s family’s land about another 15-minute walk away. Although Kilama believed that it was his land to build on and cultivate, he told me that that they were having problems because his father had died, and now others in the sub-clan disagreed with his claims.

There was more space in the camp as people were progressively returning home. Many of the stories people shared that summer were about the difficulties of return. Beatrice’s two brothers had already left, and Augustine’s family had begun to cultivate their fields, and planned to permanently return home at the end of the year after they could build more houses.

The priests’ cook, a young woman I had met the year before, was having other kinds of problems associated with return. She explained that her family was making her move back home with them, despite the fact that the father of her baby was remaining in the center. She wanted to stay with him, but they were forcing her to return home with them because he refused to pay *balo kwan* “spoiled studies” (*balo kwan* is kind of a *luk*, a payment for a child born in the absence of “traditional” courtship or marriage—more in Chapter 4).

A camp neighbor also spoke at length about her children’s hatred of farming. She said that the youth that grew up in the camp knew nothing of village life, and rather learned to
“despise” it because of their exposure to *munu* (foreign, white) culture in the camps. She worried for these youth, and for the future of her family that relied on the communal labour necessary in subsistence farming.

Another neighbor was a widow raising three children. She did not leave the camp yet because she had not built a house back on her deceased husband’s family land. She did not have funds to hire someone, building was men’s work, and her husband’s family was having enough challenges trying to build their own houses still.

Some teenage youth we encountered at the video hall and bookshop spoke about how they did not want to return to the village. They did not see the value of Acoli culture for themselves, and that it was “only good for the elders.” Besides, they did not want to be “backward farmers” (personal communications 2008).

Many other things were revealed that July while living in the camp, including persistent and widespread alcohol abuse, and domestic violence, however a growing worry, from youth, adults and elders alike, was about youth who had grown up in the camps and didn’t “know” or didn’t want to “know” village life, was palpable.

I also visited Beatrice daily. I played with Vita, did the dishes, and helped her plant beans and sunflowers. We also went over the pictures we had created together over the past years and discussed them. When I asked her if she wanted me to create an exhibit in Padibe
or Uganda, she laughed, embarrassed. She said that she did not have anything to say to people here, just that she should like to learn from her people instead (described in the Introduction).

When I heard the expressions, and even read about how youth were “out of culture” (Finnström 2008:222), I began to think about Beatrice, and what she perceived that she missed during the war and displacement years. I also thought about the teenagers who didn’t want anything to do with tekwaro. I then thought of the issues I encountered that summer, and began to see many of them as a result of the war’s impact on inter-generational social relations and a resulting “gap” in knowledge transmissions.

I began to wonder about what this inter-generational “gap” meant to post-conflict and post-conflict social organization and justice. So much of what the International community and scholars were debating at that time were the forms of justice necessary for the population to “move on” (i.e. “traditional” versus “international” mechanisms). But in people’s quotidian lives, most pressing concerns addressed inter-generational relations of extended kin networks, the rights and responsibilities, and morality implied therein, and their relationships to the land.

After that July in Padibe IDP camp, I began to wonder how people were organizing back in their village homes, and how did they organize to get there? Through which institutions and processes was land accessed? Who decided these things? And how? How were
children, women, and men recognized and given rights? How were kin relations and cultural protocols continuing to affect the lives of so many people I spoke with? And, how did inter-generational gaps in knowledge transmissions affect all these things?

Over the years, and with help from cultivating the doubt that I explored in the previous section, these questions eventually turned into ones that ultimately valorize indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and how communities themselves, through participatory kin-based inter-generational activities, teach and live that knowledge—and how engagement with tekwaro itself is a form of social repair because of how it elaborates and re-elaborates relatedness.

At that time however, I had just decided to continue my studies in Anthropology, a discipline that I thought was appropriate to understanding lived realities of post-conflict return. I also thought that it was a discipline that more directly grappled with its role as “a child of imperialism” (Gough 1993), and would thus be a more generative place from which to continue thinking through my own role within global processes of inequality. I began my PhD in 2009 in the Department of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia.

After my first year of course-work in 2010, I returned to Padibe. I stayed with the Sisters at the Mission this time, as the trip was brief. I visited Beatrice and found her well and busy

\footnote{I had received funding from the Liu Institute to conduct theatre workshops with Laura Lee in Rwanda and Uganda. The workshop in Uganda took place in Lacor, near Gulu town, and I went to Padibe afterwards.}
in the gardens at their new homestead on Kilama’s land. I talked with Augustine about some of my questions, and he said that I should speak to his family about them. I was invited for lunch, and we biked to his village to meet his extended family in their “traditional” home, on their ancestral land. This meeting encouraged me to pursue the research questions detailed in the introduction. If youth did not know, or in many instances, did not want to know tekwaro, the indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing, and the ways of life that ensured not only survival (subsistence), but engagement in their moral, political, and legal communities, what were the multiple generations doing about it? How were communities actually rebuilding? What authority functioned in the villages? What did tekwaro, and the inter-generational knowledge and relationships implied therein, mean to social repair?

I also decided after that visit to stay with Augustine’s family in their village of Pabwoc East for the new period of fieldwork. Although I considered staying with Beatrice, I knew that she was a young woman and mother living in her husband’s sub-clan, and her husband’s father had died a few years before. Although their experiences would certainly be significant to understanding social repair, I had learnt enough about Acoli social organization to know that I would have more experiential access to various aspects of village life, including the kin-based communal governance organizations, in a multi-generational homestead, accessed through the eldest son, with a living father and mother. Augustine was that son, Omon Justo and Acan Almarina are his parents, and that is how his family, sub-clan, and village of Pabwoc became my home for seven months in 2012.
I think it has been necessary to consider how my histories and relations informs the present study; the relationships it is built on, the questions being asked and how they are asked. I heed Johannes Fabian’s assertion that anthropological knowledge results from a coevalness between the researcher and her interlocutors (2002), and have tried to explore, rather than deny, my own histories of engagement with individuals and communities in Acoliland towards that end. Tacking back to my discussion of how people learn through practice (particularly referencing “Acoli indigenous education” as per Ocitti) and through interactions in the introduction (section 1.4.3), I hope that this narration, as well as the recounting of personal lessons that open Chapters 3 to 5, remind the readers of the co-created nature of knowledge.

In the first section I discussed my own history and heritage that influenced my engagement in Northern Uganda over the years. Acknowledgment of these histories at the same time questioned my involvement in Northern Uganda, in terms of potentially perpetuating inequality and violence, and caused me to more consciously, and theoretically, center peoples’ and communities’ knowledge and capacities. My relationship with Beatrice then introduced me to how Acoli indigenous knowledge, tekwaro, and the responsibilities and rights of relations–relatedness–affects everyday life. My friendship with Augustine throughout those years exposed me to his multi-generational family, and enabled further discussion of the inter-generational issues first brought up by Beatrice and others as people were set to return home. Overall, I have tried to pinpoint how my
experiences, of engagement but also of doubt, and the relationships created and maintained led me to examine inter-generational relations, indigenous knowledge, and social repair in one specific rural village.

The following section discusses my involvement with Pabwoc sub-clan and village. I then provide an overview of the methodologies used in this study, and emphasizing that research is relationship, summarize the “obligation” ethos of the study.

2.3 Pabwoc Sub-Clan and Villages

Augustine’s family’s interest in repairing inter-generational relations, or bringing “youth into culture” (see introduction), led them to be generally interested in my research project and to extend me an invitation to live with them. Additionally though, hospitality is revered in Acoli, and guests of any kind are never turned away (Girling 1960, Oloya 2015). Because I had known them for some years, and we had close relations when I lived in Padibe IDP camp as their neighbour in July 2008, it was quite natural to continue our relationship. My host family’s matriarch, Mama, said that she was happy that she would get to show me how to live back in the village, rather than just in the camp, and other extended family members were also proud to show me the results of their ongoing rebuilding efforts: manicured homesteads, new fruit saplings, new houses, pit latrines, increasing livestock, and the producing gardens of their ancestral homes. After a decade of displacement in the squalid camp, there was great relief and pride, despite the many hardships, of living back home.
Figure 17- Approaching a homestead in Pabwoc, 2012.

More so than my Jewishness, my munu-ness, my foreigner-ness, my white-ness, was always an important part of my interactions in Pabwoc and Padibe. Most people in the Padibe sub-counties have only encountered “whites” that work with churches, non-governmental agencies, or for very few, the British Colonial government. Although the people of Pabwoc did not, historically, have violent encounters with white Colonial officials or policies during Colonial occupation (as will be described in Chapter 3), the violent regime changes of the post-colonial Ugandan state, and its offshoot in the form of the Government-LRA war, manifest just some of the pernicious effects of Colonialism. Generally though, people’s
direct experiences with "whites" have been confined to encountering white priests and sisters 50 years before (Padibe Mission was built by Comboni Missionaries in 1960s), and most recently (and predominantly) from the war, many white humanitarian and NGO workers, as well as a few born-again missionaries.

Many rural Acoli people’s ideas of who I am based on my skin colour, and their own histories of dealing with people of my skin colour, mainly through churches and NGOs, has made me contend with the legacy of “whites” trying to intervene and/or convert peoples to their own ways of being, acting, and knowing in the world. One elder from Oriya, Padibe West, asked one of Pabwoc’s elders if I had fallen out of an airplane on the way to Sudan—such expression belies the incredulity that a munu would actually choose to live, eat, sleep, and learn from living in a local village.

Taking seriously my responsibilities as a hosted daughter of Bwoc is one way I have found to respect my relationships of engagement, conforming to some important social norms on local terms, but also in response to the doubt I carry concerning the entire research endeavour. Prioritizing felt “obligation” to the relationships cultivated through my research—to Beatrice and Augustine, but now through to Augustine’s extended family, to Pabwoc—is a way to conceptualize the sometimes conflicting methodological choices I have made.
When people in Padibe camp began returning home to their ancestral lands and livelihoods after a decade of displacement and two decades of war, the people I had relationships with shared with me their anxieties and concerns, as well as their joys. Beatrice worried about being disconnected from Acoli “culture” and knowing how to live well as an Acoli; Augustine’s family and extended family were worried about youth’s disconnection from kit me kwo (ways of life) Acoli. Both echoed concerns I’d heard elsewhere in Padibe about land rights, unsanctioned unions, and ways of life of the sub-clan. I thought that heeding their concerns would be important, and I sought to learn from them how people were actually social repairing—how they were working in the everyday to “move on” in post-conflict and post-displacement contexts.

The next section details how exactly I went about learning these things, or the main research methodologies used in this study.

### 2.4 Methodologies

My main methodologies in 2012, when I lived in the village of Pabwoc East, included homestead surveys within the whole village, interviews and historical song recordings with elders from Pabwoc sub-clan, and participation in a youth group’s “cultural revival” programming that included documentation of village debates, focus group interviews, and village-wide fireside chats. As will be explored, to understand what social repairing consists of in rural post-conflict contexts, I thought it imperative to live within a rural village and to take part (as much as I was able) in everyday village life. The homestead
survey within the same village meant to provide in-depth familial histories (including those of the recent war and displacement), general statistics relating to village residents (household compositions, lineage affiliations), and a forum for discussing tekwaro and residents’ recent experiences of war and displacement. As I will explain, involvement with the youth group was requested of me, and the group’s programming was a vitally rich source of public dialogue and practices regarding the effects of war and displacement on tekwaro and relatedness, beyond the boundaries of Pabwoc in the greater rural Padibe sub-counties.

Additionally, one of my final activities, the requested creation of the workbook “Tekwaro Pabwoc” for village residents in 2015, drew upon elders’ interviews and song documentation, and the writing and co-editing with Pabwoc members Nyero Augustine Caesar and Binayo Okongo, along with input from Lanek Morrish, and Yoze Ogwok, enriched my understandings of tekwaro generally, and the Pabwoc community’s understandings of tekwaro specifically.

As I will explore in the coming sub-sections, this range of methodologies afforded by my funding and my own history and relationships in the area (as previously explored), allowed me to correlate personal lessons regarding social relatedness in Pabwoc with everyday village life, as well as individual households’ histories during wartime and return with more public debate and discussion regarding the effects of war on community, households, and tekwaro. The methodologies employed both emerged from and served to elaborate my practice of research as relationship,
2.4.1 *Pabwoc East village*

The key element of my research methodology was living in my host family’s (Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya’s) homestead in the village of Pabwoc East for seven months in 2012. A second key element was the undertaking of a complete village survey of Pabwoc East in the last two months of that fieldwork.

Figure 18- Acan Almarina looking at a rainbow in her homestead. Pabwoc, 2012.

In terms of living with Mama and Baba and their extended family, I wanted to be with them in their home to share and learn from them after living next door to them in Padibe IDP camp. Intellectually, after having been in the camps and glimpsing how people survived there, I wanted to experience village life in order to see how differences of place affected quotidian relations. Methodologically, I felt that I could not understand people’s anxieties
about inter-generational relations or conceptualize indigenous social repair if I could not experience the day-to-day activities of quotidian survival in rural village life.

After an invitation at a lunch in Pabwoc in 2010, I began making plans via email with Augustine (he had access to internet while Baba and Mama did not). Like many other young men, Augustine lives part-time in the village, and part-time in Padibe center. He rents a room in the center, and spends about 75% of his nights there.

I began discussions then about proper relations in Pabwoc. As Augustine’s family was still rebuilding after the camp, he suggested that I build a new house (mud and grass thatched), pit latrine, and shower stall for my use. Then, when I leave, the family would benefit from the new infrastructure. I sent the funds in the fall of 2011.

49 As described in the introduction and as indicated in the timeline attached as Appendix C.
At the same time, I became a research affiliate with the Makerere Institute for Social Research (MISR) and The Refugee Law Project (RLP) in Uganda. Although I did not participate in many events during my fieldwork because of the distance of Padibe from their centers (MISR and RLP’s main offices in Kampala), I did review my research proposal with Professor Okello Ogwang from MISR and Stephen Oola from RLP. Additionally, RLP facilitated the obtainment of my Ugandan research permit from UN CST, and I met with Prof. Okello-Ogwang whenever I was in Kampala, on my way to and from Padibe (four times in 2012).

In that preparatory stage, I also asked Augustine to converse with the necessary authorities to see if and how my presence could directly contribute to collective village efforts (I did not know at the time that the village corresponded to Kaka Pabwoc sub-clan, and that there is a sub-clan leader and various active councils and committees that I refer to throughout this thesis as kin-based communal governance organizations). Augustine came back to me, and said that the elders requested that I write down their “history” for them. Towards that goal, I conducted three group interviews, and a minimum of six individual interviews with elders of Pabwoc. I also recorded and transcribed ten historical songs that were performed at an event organized by an elder for this purpose. The resulting 65-page colour workbook was produced for village children and youth, and entitled “Tekwaro Pabwoc.” 175 copies were distributed to all of Pabwoc (Pabwoc East and West villages) in July 2015 (I have attached a copy of the workbook as Annex A). In addition to fulfilling this request or responsibility, the interviews that elucidated kin-based relations ended up providing
invaluable background to social organization in Pabwoc, the Padibe sub-counties, and Acoliland generally (more in Chapters 3, 4, and 5). A version of this history appears in Chapter 3.

However, my insights about social relations and relatedness in rural Acoli life would not have been possible without the daily activities and instruction from Mama and the aunties, my interactions with other Pabwoc residents as they moved to and from the gardens and borehole, and the nightly fireside chats (wang oo) with all homestead residents (Augustine’s family) and occasional guests (neighbours, uncles, friends etc.). My living and learning arrangements, my “participant-learning” of Acoli indigenous knowledge or my traditional Acoli education, whereby education is meant to reinforce reciprocal kin-relations (Ocitti 1973) by members of Pabwoc, also led to ever deepening, and widening, and more complicated relationships. As described in the introduction to this chapter, I was often reminded that I now had relationship, and thus “obligation” to all of Pabwoc. Certainly, this relationship, and my learning of the responsibilities associated with it, informs much of this dissertation’s exploration of local idioms of relatedness and indigenous modes of knowing and knowledge. Like Carsten’s research on the island of Langwaki, processes involved in her own incorporation in community informed much of her study on the substances of kinship (1997).50 This kind of “participant-learning”, in

50 There is a difference of note however, as the residents of Langwaki did not at all claim common decent. In that situation, processes of incorporation were precisely the main practices that created relatedness. In Pabwoc however, the processes of incorporation that I experienced provided insight into the ways and practices in which one engages with tekwaro and creates relatedness, which also
being taught how to live by Mama and the Aunties, and in learning the Acoli ways of life (*kit me kwo*), comprised many embodied lessons of learning responsibilities, or of “obligation.” My willingness to be a student of *tekwaro pa Acoli* coupled with my vulnerability and lack of knowledge regarding how to survive in the village, allowed me to learn through participation my interdependence on others for survival, the very embodied importance of the land, as well as respect, and *kaka*, to notions of relatedness and responsibilities that I explore in the proceeding chapters.

Jennifer Cole’s remarks about her own “redefinition” by Betsimisaraka where she conducts research in Madagascar, because of her dependency, shows how people she encountered redefined her in their own terms and co-created the grounds for their shared interaction:

> I was an outsider, privileged in terms of race and class inscribed willy-nilly in the wider history of colonial contact, and these associations could never be totally forgotten. Yet in the context of daily village life, which assumed intimate knowledge of the local scene, ways of making a living, and particular human relations, I was an incompetent child, as yet unversed in local ways and entirely dependent. (2001:33)

In addition to living in Pabwoc, learning *kit me kwo Acoli*, and specifically compiling Pabwoc’s “history”, in those first few weeks I would often invite women villagers passing by—after the requisite exchange of greetings—for tea, coffee, or cocoa. While not specifically

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partially relied on an underlying framework of descent. As will be explored however, descent in itself—without participation—was not enough. Whereby participation, without descent, often was.
a methodology, this coffee house hospitality allowed me to get to know village members informally, and mostly created a space for people to ask me questions that they were curious about. Although I got to know many residents of Pabwoc in this way, and they me, I could only imagine the village as a whole, spatially or in terms of the population composition when I undertook the task of homestead surveys. I waited until the final two months of my fieldwork to conduct these surveys so that months of relationship building and experience, in addition to the outlined questions, would inform the survey conversations.

Figure 20- Augustine and author conducting the village survey. Pabwoc, 2012.

Photo by Oguti Yolanda, reproduced here with her permission.

I reviewed the two-page questionnaire, and aimed at generally recording homesteads’ and households’ recent histories of displacement, their composition, and people’s thoughts on
tekwaro pa Acoli. The survey questionnaire ended up serving as the basis for conversations with a representative of each of the 48 extended homesteads in the village at that time. They lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours. These conversations usually took place in the late afternoon, after people had returned from the gardens. There are sometimes several households in a homesteads (like ours) that are intimately related, and because of the close relationship, I decided to conduct the interview at the homestead level. People’s relations in a homestead, and not solely within a household (house with cooking fire) were important to understanding inter-generational relations as well, and the “survey” was very useful in identifying patterns of residence. I also asked each representative their dog-ot (lineage) affiliation, and learned that every single person within Pabwoc were Bwoc’s direct descendants or had married one of them, mostly through patrilineal affiliation, but sometimes through the maternal line as well (this will be further discussed in Chapter 3 through 5). In addition to the useful information regarding histories of displacement, residence, and kinship, the surveys gave me the excuse (and discipline needed) to travel to and visit with each and every person’s home within the village. This was important for several reasons, including seeing who lived with whom and the range of standard of living within the village, but primarily, sitting and spending time with people in their homes is an effective way to communicate respect.

Before I had arrived in 2012, Augustine had also pre-arranged my intensive language classes. I had picked up a fair amount of Acoli on my previous visits and had taken private

51 The original is included here as Appendix B.
lessons in Vancouver in 2011, but I wanted to be conversant. Most women in Pabwoc did not speak English, and I also knew that being able to understand people directly would greatly aid my work (and relationships). I wanted to learn while in Pabwoc, and Augustine arranged for a teacher from Kitgum to travel the 30 minutes by motorcycle. My teacher Ojera John Okello was a high school teacher, who also recorded two radio-shows per week about the Acoli language and Acoli traditions. The lessons were five days a week over five weeks, and although I could communicate quite well by the end, I still continued to conduct the formal individual and group interviews with Augustine.

Although Augustine was not trained as a translator or transcriber, and had no previous experience as a research assistant, I thought it was important that a “son of Bwoc” be present at all the more formal interviews. I felt that whatever the outcomes of this research project, whether in a cultural workbook for popular distribution or as academic papers or a dissertation, possibly the most important part was having a youth of Pabwoc present to share in the reception of the requested indigenous sub-clan-based knowledge.52

In addition to participating in whatever parts of rural daily life I could join in (attending funerals and sub-clan gatherings in addition to everyday survival), group and individual interviews with elders about tekwaro Pabwoc, and the homestead survey conversations, other miscellaneous activities I engaged in in Pabwoc included a focus group interview

52 Similarly, I engaged Augustine’s brother, Oyo, to record genealogies of the three lineages of Pabwoc.
with 10 male youth (I had invited all the surrounding male youth, about 15) and the recording of the three lineage genealogies, what people described as *yenyo kwaro* “looking for the grandfathers/ancestors” (there were three lineages—Abonga, Otuna, and Ocuga—within Pabwoc).

Most interviews were digitally recorded, and interview notes, as well as journal entries were handwritten in journals. Augustine transcribed most of the interviews and historical songs that were used in Chapter 3. I typed up the five journals used to record these many elements of fieldwork when I returned to the University of British Columbia throughout 2013.53

Outside of Pabwoc, I interviewed Rwot Odoki of Padibe, the Kitgum Land officer, the Padibe IDP camp commander, Enoji (the oldest man in Padibe), and Pacoto (Augustine’s uncle from Pamot sub-clan, a frequent visitor). I also enlisted Francis Oyil to create a rough map showing all the villages and *kaka* (clans, sub-clans, lineages) in Padibe sub-counties, to inquire from Kal Kwaro Padibe about *abila* and *ayweya* (ancestral and spirit shrines) that had been “raised” in the villages since return throughout Padibe, and to collect and translate songs composed about the war and camp years. Many casual conversations, including with Beatrice and Kilama, as well as the Sisters, complemented what I learned through my relations with members of Pabwoc.

53 I did not have access to electricity while in Pabwoc; though Padibe Town Center had newly-installed power for the first two weeks of my stay. The power was then taken out by a storm mid-March 2012, and only returned in late October. Generators were ubiquitous in the Town Center, though were rarely seen in the village, except on occasions such as weddings or funerals.
The other major activity that I engaged in outside of Pabwoc was participation in, and support for, a youth group’s “cultural revival” programming.

2.4.2 The youth group

When I received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council scholarship, and later a Trudeau scholarship to support my PhD studies in 2011, I felt that I also wanted to help Augustine in his own endeavours. Since I had received scholarships for my work that supported me in pursuing the current project, I felt it only fair that he should also reap the rewards from work I could not have done without his help.54

Over the years, Augustine had introduced me to a youth group he was a part of that formed while they were in Padibe IDP camp. They used traditional music, dance and drama (MDD) to bring youth together in the camp. He wanted to reactivate the group now that people had returned home and sought funding to create a program in Padibe West and East sub-counties on cultural revival using MDD.55

I was unsure if I should help fund the project. On the one hand, formal employment for a university graduate in Northern Uganda is very low, especially in rural areas, with most job

54 I felt the same about Beatrice, and she and Kilama had asked for, and received, support in opening a small store in Padibe center. These contributions came from my stipend and not my research expenses.

55 I imagine that my own interest in tekwaro, contributed to Augustine’s proposal. And in retrospect, his interest in tekwaro likewise peaked my own. It is hard to say which was the chicken and which was the egg.
prospects coming from NGOs. Pursuing this program would help Augustine gain valuable experience in his desired line of work. Also, I was admittedly interested in how a youth group would go about “reviving” culture, and how they would reconcile the apparent contradiction between valorizing indigenous cultural knowledge and using non-indigenous teaching (though not necessarily knowing) means to do so.

On the other hand, I had wanted to distinguish myself from other munus that residents had met in the past, who were mainly associated with churches and NGOs, that wanted to “teach” the community something. A deep epistemological concern about how knowledge can be known, and whose knowledge is valued is what anchors much of my practice. Responding to the violent histories of research discussed above, centering community knowledge and capacity—rather than trying to change it—is an important impetus, and ethos, to the project itself. Yet here was an initiative by a community member, a youth community member, which was about intervention and change.

I was, and still am, deeply conflicted about my involvement with the youth group. Theoretical ideals and real life relationships and responsibilities are not always easy to reconcile. Time and experience has only textured that experience, not effaced it. I was conflicted about being a “funder” because of the unequal power relations that that would entail, but I also felt that our differential access to resources existed in any case (whether I

56 I acknowledge however that I am overgeneralizing NGOs, and that there are many different kinds of NGOs that both challenge and reinforce these violences (Choudry 2013).
funded the project or not), and not honouring Augustine’s request would definitely not change that. There was also a part of me that believed that contributing to a youth-led cultural program might truly benefit various communities by itself instigating inter-generational interactions. And because it was a youth-led participatory initiative by a founding member of the group, who was I to condemn it? But for that matter, who was I to condone it through funding either?

There are more pros and cons, and even today I can argue both sides until my head spins. Ultimately, I decided to fund the project, partially from my subsistence scholarship and partially from my research expenses, where they could be applicable. Would I make the same decision on a new project today? No. But being able to say this has only come with learning much about local kin-based communal governance organizations, and the local politics and power-plays of employees of NGOs, as well as my newer, expanded relationships to Pabwoc village.

But I explicitly write about this dilemma here, with no resolution, because it crystallizes some of my enduring doubt about the research process itself. What does it mean to your engagement, and to your relationships, to come to a particular place and community with institutional backing and support? What networks of prestige and power do you carry, and how do they affect the people that you encounter and befriend? How are responsibilities, accountabilities, and “obligation” more generally interpreted, and what does it mean, both personally and professionally, in these contexts?
The group, it turns out had a board of directors in Kitgum town, and the revival program, as designed, employed six local youth between the ages of 20 and 33. The youth group rented an office room in Padibe Town Center, the center. The proposal included identifying “cultural” groups in the villages within Padibe sub-counties, and to choose 4-6 to work with for six months. A cultural competition in the center, sensitization for religious leaders and traditional leaders, and trainings for the cultural groups were all planned and budgeted.

Although I mostly stayed within Pabwoc, pursuing language courses and learning how to be kweri (culturally knowledgeable, as Mama and the Aunties told me), I participated in youth group activities about once a week. Participating and observing two meetings with Rwodi (traditional chiefs) and their executive councils, one training session on “traditional culture” by a man from Kitgum town, a “sensitization” meeting to bring together traditional and religious leaders, five village debates, three village-wide fireside chats, and a cultural competition over the seven months, all informed me of community members’ (both staff and participants) thoughts and beliefs about tekwaro pa Acoli, the fissures and struggles that have resulted from the war, and further back from Colonial encounters (mostly talked about through Christianity and English education), and about the generational knowledge and participation in these processes of change.

57 The group hired a local Acoli high school teacher who had a MA in religious studies to facilitate a daylong workshop between religious leaders (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Pentecostal) and cultural leaders (some representatives of the kin-based communal governance organizations—mostly from Kal Kwaro Padibe, the chiefdom level one).
The dilemmas that funding the youth group brought to the fore have been very important in thinking through my research practice, and some of the consequences of my responsibilities to the relationships (in this case Augustine) that I have made over the past 12 years. And although my relationships with people in Padibe are the source of an enduring respect and obligation ethos, what Tillmann-Healy calls “friendship as method” (2003), this at the same time gathers the paradoxical dilemma of accountability and power inherent in the research process itself. Thinking through my research practice as relationship allows for consideration of the messy histories and entanglements that are always present in the scholarly co-creation of new knowledge, and of the anthropologist’s coeval existence with a group of individuals in space and time.

2.5 Analysis

Participant-learning in the village of Pabwoc East, a homestead survey within the same village, the creation of the workbook Tekwaro Pabwoc, and participation in some of the youth group’s “cultural revival” programming served as my main research methodologies. Upon return to Vancouver, I typed up my five journals that contained all my handwritten field notes and interviews, as well as the village survey results. The village survey results were calculated by hand, and facts per extended homestead were compiled, such as: 1) kinds of marriage (polygamous or monogamous), 2) homestead composition (multi-generational? Daughters or sons of Bwoc? etc.), 3) times and details of displacements from the war, 4) procedures enacted to return after displacement, 5) practice of wang oo, 6)
ideas about *tekwaro*. I also reviewed the interview transcriptions and organized the data into a timeline of my experiences in the Padibe sub-counties.

Consulting these various forms of documented knowledge, I cross-referenced the sources to understand how general trends in peoples’ understandings of *tekwaro*, daily practices in village life, survey results, and public dialogue and debate regarding the effects of war converged around certain key issues. I mostly identified these issues or themes by their frequency—and the time given to their explanation and practice—in conversation, interviews, debates and everyday life. For example, the subject of Chapter 4, *cuna* (courtship) was much discussed within the village survey, amongst focus group interviews, in the youth group’s debate programs, and also deeply affected the everyday lives of four youth within my host family’s compound, not to mention most youth over the age of 16 that I encountered. This recurrence and prevalence of *cuna*—in conversation, interviews, surveys, debates, and in daily village life—identified it as a key site of interest to a large majority of people in post-conflict Padibe. *Tic Acoli* (“village work”) and *Kaka* (“the clan”), the subjects of the other substantive chapters of this thesis, emerged in the same way—through a cross referencing of the various sources of knowledge that I engaged in as my main research methodologies.

Throughout my writing process, I have been in touch with Nyero Augustine Caesar by email and have discussed these emergent themes and practices. Additionally, as previously indicated, I traveled to Pabwoc in April 2015 to discuss these themes and practices, what I
have identified as frameworks for inter-generational engagement with *tekwaro* that serves to elaborate relatedness (performing social repair) with the community at large. At a party gathering, I discussed what I had begun to write about, and asked for input and guidance in these matters.

### 2.6 Conclusion: Research As Relationship

As explored in the preceding sections, my methodologies and analysis were informed by my own histories, positioning, and relations, from the relationships I subsequently sought in Northern Uganda, from the questions that emerged from those relationships, and from my attempts to create, sustain, and reflect on the ideals of reciprocity, trust, and respect in those relationships.

Privileging the importance of relationships, as part of methodology, theory and analysis, also resonates with some aspects of what are described as Indigenous research paradigms (Chilisa 2012, Kovach 2009, Smith 1999, Wilson 2008). Although I do not wish to appropriate Indigenous scholar’s insights, I use them as guides in grappling with my own engagement in research processes. Margaret Kovach’s exploration of responsibilities and commitment to the collective, or to the peoples with whom you are researching, is fundamental, as is Shawn Wilson’s expression of “relational accountability” that, similarly, requires you to be accountable, or responsible, to the people and the whole environment that you are engaging in your research process. These requisite responsibilities mirror what I learned about being a hosted daughter of Bwoc—through my continuing
participating in my host family’s endeavours, my participation in *ribbe kaka* (clan unity) through the production of the workbook, my commitment to participation in matters that concern *Kaka* Pabwoc, including land rights—and of what I learned about local ideas of relatedness in general. It is from my sense of responsibilities to the collective, to the people and environment in Pabwoc and Padibe, to my sense of responsibilities and “obligation”, that I write up the current study.

I have tried my best to present the nature of my research relationships and how they emerged in this chapter. How I came to be “obligated” to *Kaka* Pabwoc not only speaks to these relationships and the research methodologies they created, but it also provided the experiential basis for me to understand contemporary notions of relatedness in rural Acoliland, indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and thus localized processes of social repair. My responsibilities as a hosted daughter of Bwoc extends to the writing of this dissertation itself, and it is partially because of this relationship that I unabashedly privilege local processes of kin-based inter-generational engagement and participation in sub-clan “ways”, and through *tekwaro*, in various forms. Perhaps it is also the impetus behind my assertion about the importance of the land, and of the vital promotion of the protection of communal rights to the land.

Finally, conceptualizing and performing research as relationship allows for a reflexive approach, which utilizes generative doubt concerning the appropriation of people’s experiences and life-worlds in research endeavours, and prioritizes “obligation” to
research relationships and the privileging of local forms of knowing, teaching, and learning. It also acknowledges that social science research, and learning and knowledge production in general, is always the result of some kinds of relationships and interactions, as explored in the introduction, and that conscious attention, and disclosure, should be paid to the sources of the newly created knowledge.

I'll conclude by turning again to the last paragraph of Things Fall Apart to reflect on the alienating act of writing itself. The stories told and the analysis employed in this dissertation is just one aspect of multi-dimensional, enduring, and transformative relationships I valorize. The responsibilities I carry to the academic world, to my committee members, to the University, and to my funders (in the paragraphs and chapters here) is indeed one aspect of these relationships, but it is just one aspect. My humanity, or what my own historied sense of humanity means in encountering intimate war and now post-war experiences through relationships, and my responsibilities to those relationships, has been and will continue to be, far more pressing.

It is precisely in moments like the changing of my shoes to "honour" Pabwoc that I try to consciously practice research that valorizes relationship, responsibilities, and "obligation", and that thus centers and valorizes tekwaro, indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing.
Chapter 3: *Ngom Kwaro* (Ancestral Land): “We Are Sons and Daughters of Bwoc”

3.1 Introduction–Home Fires Finally Burning Again

It was June of 2010. I was traveling to Padibe late at night, when it was already dark and chilly. Friends at JRP in Gulu were traveling to Kitgum for work, and graciously offered to take me with them, and then drive me the extra hour up to Padibe. I had never traveled the roads at night before, but security had been increasing ever since a ceasefire in late 2006, and curfews on road travel during the dark hours were slowly lifted. I also heard that most people had left the camp and returned to their home villages.

The night was thick, not uncommon in the wet season, and the moon and stars were hiding behind the clouds. The air smelled of roasted groundnuts and damp grass. I was a little scared because of my memories of traveling on this same road in 2004. At that time, in broad daylight, I was traveling with a government military convoy that came upon an ambush by a small group of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels that left one man dead and one seriously injured.

But that was six years previous to this memory, and a lot had changed in that time. Home was dead then.

As I squeezed *those* memories back in place, I noticed little specks of red-orange fire all over the darkened countryside. My voice wavering a little, I asked the driver, what that
was, he replied—“Oh, do not worry Lara, there is peace here now”, and he went on to explain that it was people’s home fires, “back in the village”, and that as some of the fire specks were moving, people must also be out collecting ngwen (white ants, a delicacy) with fire torches.

This struck me as so very strange, and then I realized that I had never seen signs of life in the countryside/bush before. As recounted, I had previously visited Padibe Internally Displaced Person’s Camp in 2004 and 2005 (as a photographer), and then began staying for longer periods after the ceasefire (3-6 weeks depending), in 2006, 2007, and 2008 (as a photographer/researcher during my MFA). During all those previous times, the countryside and roadsides were empty, with no signs of life other than the occasional military checkpoint. In fact, the drive up from Kitgum town felt like you were driving through a no-man’s-land (and you technically were, as the entire rural population was finally displaced to the camps in 2003 and only began to leave in late 2007; it thus served as a no-man’s-land, a militarized, “empty” space between two opponents) until you happened upon the overcrowded camp that at its peak housed about 42,000 people (camp commander interview 2012).

But that was then. Now, people had mostly left the camp for their home villages, and those that remained in what was previously the camp, lived in what residents call the center.58

58 The center actually refers to the trading center in Padibe, which the camp was organized around in 1997. Padibe officially became a “town council” in 2012. For more on the urbanization of former IDP camp sites, please see Whyte et al. (2014).
Now I had returned to visit with my host family and finally visit them back in their home village of Pabwoc East! It was a dream to be able to visit them at home after only knowing their life in the IDP camp, circumstances that claimed more lives than the direct violence from the LRA or UPDF violence (Finnström 2008:133).

The fires in the countryside that night filled me with great warmth and wonder. As I sat in the dark car smiling rather stupidly, I felt the profound change–yet didn’t fully comprehend it–the people I had met in Padib IDP camp, including my host family and Beatrice’s family, were finally...really...home.

There is a large body of literature spanning decades that addresses the effects of displacement from “traditional” homes (and/or changes in land tenure) on identity and social organization (for example Colson 1971, Galaty 1980, Gulliver 1958, Holtzman 2000, Malkki 1995, Thiranagama 2007). The case in rural Northern Uganda, however, is quite unique because after the decade (or so59) of forced displacement, the majority of those displaced (which was 90% of the population, and 100% of the rural population at the height of the war) returned to their ancestral villages or previously occupied lands by 2009. While many of these studies address how individual and communal identity and relationships have been transformed by displacement, or changes in land tenure, very few address what transformations occur as a return to people’s “original” ancestral homes, and

59 Depending on the location in Acoliland, some areas were displaced at different times see Branch’s reference to displacement by the Government as early as 1988 (2011:69).
system of land tenure, proceeds. It is important to note that I use the term “original” home cautiously here to reference predominant pre-displacement residence patterns. For many people, women “married” in the camps, children born in the camps, those that were denied residence upon return for various reasons, as well as those that chose to live elsewhere (migrated to urban centers, emigrated etc.), a return to their “original” pre-displacement homes was either not possible or not desirable. This “return” of the majority of the population however, presents opportunity for elaborating the importance of the land to Acoli social, political, and moral community, to relatedness itself.

It is thus the connections between the land and Acoli relatedness that I wish to center in this Chapter. As Jomo Kenyatta asserted in Facing Mount Kenya, when a European robs people of their land, he is taking away not only their livelihood, but also the material symbol that holds family and tribe together (1938:317). Examining what happens when the material symbol is returned, or when people return to it, is the focus of this chapter and lays the foundation for practices relating to the regulation of social unions and kin-based communal governance that I explore in the next two chapters. Understanding the centrality of land to Acoli relatedness, or as the idiom of relatedness, utilizes Carsten’s insights about transcending western constructs of the social/biological binary to examine how human relations, and human engagements and relations to and with the land create relatedness.

Thinking about the land, and land-human relations in this way establishes how practices

60 Some of these denials hinged upon increasingly strict rules regarding kin access to land whereas guests are no longer welcome and “missing links” as described by Whyte et al. (2012) whereby a woman’s husband was killed, divorcees etc. Accessing and denying access to land will be more fully explored throughout Chapters 3 to 5.
activated by a return to the land, to “home”, work at re-elaborating relatedness, at making home living again, or re-engaging with indigenous knowledge that creates social, political, and moral communities. I recognize these re-elaborations, life creations, and re-engagements as social repair in contemporary contexts, and thus explore here the importance of land to rural Acoli, not only as essential livelihood in subsistence farming communities, but in terms of a “material symbol” that indeed holds family and community together, as the idiom of Acoli relatedness itself.

As briefly referred to in the introduction, there is the Acoli saying, “ngom pito dano”, the land grows, and feeds, and plants, people. The word ngom translates to English as earth or soil, but in Acoli it refers to more than the materiality of the land. According to Oloya, ngom refers to the soil, but also to settlements, tenure regimes, and social relations and organization of the Acoli:

Ngom descriptively, was more about practices and uses of the soil. As such, it delineated a tenure regime – a social relation that proclaimed “original” link between the individuals, territory and the agnates – which were seen as self-evident, primordial and/or natural. (2015:233)

Although the people now known as Acoli mostly moved onto the specific territories associated with contemporary villages in Northern Uganda within the last 300-100 years, as will be recounted in the next section, their migrations were confined to the area of South Sudan and Northern Uganda. Although speaking of primordial relations between people
and more recently settled land, as particular physical sites, may seem questionable, it is the
general human-land relations within that region that Oloya refers to as primordial.
Residents’ relationships with the land for their ways of life, foodstuffs, subsistence etc.
remain important even though the exact territories in which they live (within an
approximate 600 kilometer distance from the first migration detailed in their oral
histories), and local and global realities, have changed. As discussed in the introduction,
many of the current peoples who made up Acoliland are descendants of groups who were
known as Luo Gangi- Luo of the home or village, because of their more sedentary,
subsistence agricultural lifestyle. Therefore, their tekwaro, or indigenous knowledge
associated with ways of life (kit me kwo), as well as the organization of social relations, will
remain “primordial” or “natural” because of its rootedness to the land, to village life, and to
an essentially subsistence farming lifestyle. The ordering of social relations, or social
institutions as p'Bitek asserts, is based on engagement with the indigenous knowledge that
is both shaped by and shapes the land. Ngom in Acoli then, is articulated conceptually in
language as a material symbol, or idiom of relatedness itself.

Attending to the land as an idiom of relatedness also acknowledges that land in Acoli is also
not, or not ever, only about common ground and social relations in the present. Land
anchors the present to the past through the ancestors, and connects contemporary
circumstance and relations to the future through the children. The land officer in Kitgum
district, Matthew Otto, once told me: “...for Acoli, the ancestors actually own the land. We
occupy it in the present, but it is really for future generations” (personal interview, July 9th,
2012). Oloya (2015:234 fn1013) also emphasizes that in Acoli, land is entrusted by the dead to the living, and that the living must safeguard the land for the unborn.

*Ngom Pito Dano*, as Acoli acknowledgement of vital human-land relations, specifically those of the home and village, can also be understood as an expression of an indigenous legal order. Cree legal scholar Val Napoleon uses the term indigenous legal orders to refer to knowledge that is simultaneously legal, religious, philosophical, social, and scientific (2007). Zoe Todd, a Red-River Metis scholar working in Paulutuuq, Arctic Canada, utilizes these insights to explore human-fish relations, and the ways in which they “share complex and nuanced political and social landscapes that shape life in the community” (2014:218).

Julie Cruikshank explores glaciers in the Yukon territory as sentient and knowing landscapes (2005) that assert mutual relationships of entanglements of “nature” and “culture”, as she terms it. Vanessa Watts, an Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee scholar, emphasizes as she details an indigenous conception of Place-Thought, “as Indigenous peoples, we are extensions of the very land we walk upon” (2013:23).

Similarly, what has been called the post-humanist or ontological turn in the social sciences and anthropology utilizes these indigenous knowledge insights, sometimes disturbingly unacknowledged as such (as pointed out by Todd 2016, Watts 2013). Eduardo Kohn (2013), Donna Haraway (1989), and Eduardo Viveiros De Castro (2004) as a few examples, all advocate for scholarship that moves beyond strictly human relations, and that acknowledges a western academic bias or limitation by centering human-human relations
Importantly, the primacy of the “human” or “culture” or “social” supported human mastery and subjugation of that which was deemed non-human, biological or natural, as seen in the histories of centuries of violent Colonial and Imperial interventions in indigenous cultures (racialized as “primitive” and therefore closer to nature) and their environments (Watts 2013). Learning about the land in Acoli as the main idiom of relatedness, as the material symbol, yet also more than just the symbol, corroborates and supports the ideas recounted above that have been expressed in the indigenous knowledge systems of many peoples throughout the world since long ago.

The land in Acoli, both philosophically and practically, is therefore an important material symbol, anchor, and participant that guides and creates normative and ethical multi-temporal interpersonal, human-land, and inter-generational relations and processes. Due to its enduring necessity to survival, and the customary communal tenure system in place, it also has the capacity to re-gather community together and work towards re-elaborating relatedness, grounded in the land. If village ancestral lands are an essential part of an Acoli legal order, and act as a material anchor and metaphor for relatedness, for sociality itself and social practices, considering social repair and how people “move on” and re-organize after war must also look to that same “symbol” for practices that re-make relatedness.

The ways of life in the IDP camps, the practices and habitus, the human-land relations, and the taskscape (Ingold 2000) differed greatly from life in the villages. At home, children learned the daily and annual cycle of work connected to the land. They learned how to
farm, collect firewood, rear animals etc., all the while receiving important inter-generational instruction, provoked by the landscape. At home they also visibly and spatially learned about their extended families as they corresponded to land boundaries (villages), and how the extended lineage and sub-clan functions as a unit through communal labour practices, land allocation, ritual, dispute resolution mechanisms, and respectful prohibitions of non-human elements (*kwer*). In contrast, within the camp, there was a stark disconnection from the land. Reliance on others for food (from the World Food Program) distributed to individual households produced a general level of societal dependency never experienced before. According to many residents, this dependency promoted, and its legacy continues to promote, individualism (*ki langat acel-acel*), a most undesirable trait in Acoli subsistence village life reliant on interdependence. Curfews and scarce firewood abolished the practice of *wang oo* (nightly fireside chats), while overcrowding, and a kind of forced urbanization seen in increased access to discos, videos, and gambling halls in the camp added to a general decrease in parental and elder interactions with youth, and decreased authority, that the move away from the spatial structure of the village already engendered.

This chapter considers these profound differences between camp and village life, and thus explores Acoli relatedness as grounded in home (*gang, paco*) and *ngom kwaro*, people’s “ancestral” or “traditional” lands (literally, land of the grandfathers/ancestors). Learning from one village/sub-clan, that of Pabwoc in Padibe West sub-county, Lagwel parish, Lamwo district, I will first recount a history of *Kaka* Pabwoc (sub-clan). This narrated history of Pabwoc will situate individuals within the village to each other, to the landscape,
and will further situate the village of Pabwoc within the Padibe sub-counties and the rest of Acoliland by discussing the clan origins of the current villages, and the historical kin-based communal governance organizations present in the area. I will then discuss the village’s recent history during the LRA-Government war, tracking the war’s effects on one village’s residents, and one family (my host family) in particular. Turning to a description of Pabwoc East village as it was in 2012 (during my main period of fieldwork, 2-3 years after return from Padibe IDP camp) and detailing quotidian activities and relations on one homestead will consider how a return to traditional or ancestral land itself works to roco wat (restore relations), to literally repair, re-create, and learn through everyday practices and relationships with the land. Emphasizing tic Acoli, or Acoli work relating to subsistence, as key organizing and relationship building practices, I show how survival and the ways of life in the village engenders a re-engagement with tekwaro pa Acoli, and thus a re-elaboration of relatedness. Acoli work is therefore recognized as a boundary process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016) that can re-gather community members to re-elaborate relatedness, and as such is a key site of social repairing in post-conflict and post-displacement rural Padibe sub-counties.

3.2 History of Pabwoc (Tekwaro Pabwoc)

3.2.1 Looking for the ancestors

As detailed in Chapter 2, I came to Pabwoc through my friendship with “a son of Bwoc”, Nyero Augustine Caesar (Augustine), and my relationship with his parents whom I lived
near during my stay in Padibe IDP camp in 2008. Augustine is the eldest son of Omono Justo Langoya (Baba) and Alamarina Acan (Mama). They have nine children in total, although their eldest daughter died in 2013. Omono Justo Langoya is son to Oyo Batholomeo, who was son to Gabriel Omal, who was son to Ociti, who was son to Ocuga, who was son to Bwoc, who was the first-born son of Bobi. Augustine’s kaka (clan) name is Bobi, after this apical ancestor. Their dog-gang’s (mostly referred to as clan as well, but I have used the term sub-clan throughout to acknowledge Bobi as the father and apical ancestor) name is Pabwoc (pa-Bwoc, literally, of Bwoc), after his son. Their dog-ot (mostly referred to as sub-clan, but I use the term lineage throughout to acknowledge Bwoc and Bobi levels of kin-based communal governance) name is Ocuga, after his son. The Kaka Pabwoc also corresponds to the physical village of Pabwoc, although the village was administratively divided into Pabwoc East and West in 2002 during the camp years, partially to facilitate ease and increased access to aid resources while displaced to Padibe IDP camp. Although Bwoc had two sons, Ocuga and Otuna, there are three dog-ot (so-

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61 The history presented here is an androcentric one, and represents a male perspective. While fluid, the organization of Acoli social relations has been predominantly patriarchal—both patrilineal and patrilocal. It was recounted to me in various parts, by four male elders, two male adults, and two female adults (who were born in, not married into, Pabwoc).

62 The Pabwoc lineage mentioned in Girling (1960:78) and cited in Dolan (2009:104 fn34) does not seem to be the same as the one who hosted me. The difference in kwer (a non-human entity that has prohibitions attached to it (stone, frog etc.) between the one cited and my host village indicates that any common kin or descent affiliation between the two is highly unlikely. See p’Bitek (1971:89) for how clans that had split recognize their common origins by common kwer.

63 Translated terminologies are difficult here. Oloya (2015) gives a different description of Acoli governance units than cited here. As previously indicated, I relied on how the community itself expressed its own components and the best way to indicate relationship between Bobi, Pabwoc, and Ocuga, Otuna, Abonga.

64 According to the LC1 of Pabwoc East in 2012 (Kitara Kramer), as the village population grows it is necessary to split to be able to organize effectively. For example, at the end of 2012, there became a Pabwoc Central, and today in 2016, there is a Pabwoc North as well. In the long term, these will
called lineages) in Pabwoc today because Ocuga split, producing a third named Abonga, around the 1940s. Each and every resident of Pabwoc East and West villages in 2012 could trace themselves through birth or marriage to Ocuga, Otuna, or Abonga lineages.65

Their apical ancestor, Bobi, had three sons- Bwoc, Dera and Oyo (laite pe). Their Rwot (leader–hereditary “chief”66) came from the youngest son’s line (Kaka Oyo sub-clan). At some point, two more kaka came in and joined Bobi: Bobi Agoro67 and Bobi Pawor. It was recalled that these five sub-clans of Bobi–Bwoc, Dera, Oyo, Bobi Agoro and Bobi Pawor–joined the Padibe Chiefdom around the time of Rwot Ogwok’s rule towards the end of the 1800s. Rwot Ogwok of Kaka Padibe came from Pamot Kal sub-clan.68

affect the “promotion” of Pabwoc villages as a Parish (requiring 7 villages), and possibly eventually as its own sub-county. It may not affect kin-based communal governance organizations however (lineages, sub-clan, clan).

65 The nature of village membership and of rights to land in the village have changed over the years, to include or exclude non-kin members. A full explanation will follow.

66 Sometimes called Rwot moo, “chief from oil”, referring to anointed traditional leader as opposed to rwot kalam, “chief from pen”–those assigned by the British in colonization efforts (Oloya 2015:138).

67 It is said that Bobi Agoro joined because the man (who became head of Bobi Agoro) had a falling out with the Rwot of where he had lived over the illegal harvest of the Rwot’s beehives. He was shunned and lived in the bush until one day Otuna (a son of Bwoc) came upon this man as he went to draw water. Agoro moved with Otuna back home, and after a private conversation, told him of his troubles. Otuna agreed to look after Agoro, and he, and his descendants, joined the kaka thereafter. Evidencing the kin-like relationship is contemporary practice that prohibits marriages between Bobi Pabwoc (because Otuna was a son of Bwoc) and Bobi Agoro.

68 Augustine’s grandmother, and his eldest living uncles (his grandmother’s brothers) are of Pamot.
Available texts do not exactly corroborate the preceding details, nor do they account for the nature of relations of the clans and sub-clans that made/make up Kaka Padibe. According to Owot (1976:190), Bobi technically joined “Padibe” when they joined Pamot (Rwot Ogwok’s sub-clan) at Atango, sometime between 1769-1796. As Atkinson writes regarding Kaka Padibe and its composite “lineages”, “conflicting views on the relationship among these lineages abound” (2010:249 fn47). Although Atkinson attempts to synthesize information about the Padibe Chiefdom, he mostly focuses on the transfer of Rwotship from Potini to Pamot (1994:248-250).

John Jaramogi Oloya’s (2015) excellent thesis on Acoli communal government, however, better describes these “chiefdom” affiliations, that correspond to both Bobi and Padibe’s histories. Refuting the term chiefdom, Oloya uses the term kaka. A kaka, according to him,

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69 Atkinson uses lineage in the classic anthropological sense, to denote shared descent in a group, as opposed to fictive kin ties in associations such as clans and chiefdoms.
70 The transfer itself is still quite controversial, as contemporary Rwot of Potini claims that Pamot claimed Rwotship unlawfully from them. Potini had petitioned Ker Kal Kwaro to get re-instated but was formally denied in 2012. Potini has been trying for three generations to be re-instated. As was explained to me by Rwot Potini himself, their royal regalia were stolen as they fled southwards from Sudan. He proceeded to show me the special white rain stones that they still did have. As part of contemporary Kal Kwaro Padibe, Potini is still responsible for rain rituals, historically the most important rituals conducted by the Rwot (Atkinson 2010).
was/is an association of agnates, or clans or sub-clans or lineages (which he notes are also called *kaka*), based on facultative mutualism, a relationship he describes as “empowering, but not compelling” (2015:204). Facultative mutualism is a biological term for organisms who interact and derive benefit from each other, but whom are not fully dependent on each other for survival (Biology-Online N.d.). Oloya asserts that *kaka* was therefore more of a brotherhood, a collection of possibly unrelated different agnates that came together for mutual interest.\(^7^1\)

*Kaka* as a relationship of facultative mutualism is very useful as it explains both the incorporation of two non-kin agnatic groups into Bobi, and *Kaka* Bobi’s later, and enduring affiliation with *Kaka* Padibe.\(^7^2\) As Branch corroborates, many of the so-called chiefdoms incorporated other chiefdoms, each with their own, still-functioning chief and attending councils (2011:47). Pabwoc elders also emphasized this facultative mutualism, or non-hierarchical sense of brotherhood as they described why the united *Kaka* Bobi (the three original kin sub-clans plus the two incorporated others) eventually joined *Kaka* Padibe. They spoke of how *Kaka* Padibe was very powerful at that time due to trade networks, and

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\(^7^1\) Pabwoc community members themselves use the word *kaka* generally as well to refer to various kin-based communal governance organizations. When asked to clarify however, they used the following terms: Dog Ot (lineage, e.g. Ocuga), Dog Gang (sub-clan, e.g. Pabwoc), Kaka (clan, e.g. Bobi). As stated earlier, I use *kaka* to generally refer to these organizations, and sub-clan for Pabwoc, throughout this work.

\(^7^2\) Before reading Oloya’s work, I was always quite confused by scholars’ descriptions of Acoli chiefdoms that did not seem to explain or account for the associations that community members described.
that Rwot Padibe offered *Kaka* Bobi the most security. They particularly recounted how their own Rwot of Bobi at that time, Rwot Okello Mwaka, was a contemporary of Rwot Ogwok, not a subordinate, and as proof, offered stories about how they learned Arabic and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro together.

In addition to the importance of understanding the nature of both Bobi and Padibe affiliations, the brotherhood character of *Kaka*, as Oloya writes, is important in understanding the general growth of Acoli agnatic identity (2015:18). Both Atkinson (2010) and Oloya (2015) insist that the formation of Acoli identity was not only a Colonial invention imposed from above (as asserted by some scholars, see for example Behrend 1999:14, who asserted that “the Acholi did not exist in pre-colonial times”), and they meticulously describe the gradual process of alliances, fusion, and fission, as well as the natural disasters that spurred and led to gradual formation of Acoli identity.

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73 Security was spoken about in terms of both food security and physical security for livestock and people.  
74 I have found references that say that i) Okello Mwaka was a translator for Major Delme Radcliffe (Bere 1947:6), and that ii) he eventually played the role of chief executive Prime Minister of Puranga chiefdom (Acholi Times 2014), which indicates the further “scattering” of Bobi beyond Padibe after the early 1920s, a “scattering” referenced by the elders recounted in this narrative.  
75 Most of the scholars that take this perspective explore how colonial categories of ethnic identifications reified more nuanced and complex alliances into a more identifiable subject of governance in relation to the Colonial Protectorate of Uganda. Importantly, as p’Bitek notes, at the turn of the 20th century, Acoliland was made up of 30 independent political units, of which *Kaka* Padibe Chiefdom was one (1971:12). Essentially, both camps are right, however as Oloya (2015) explains, it is important to recognize the nature of the *kaka*, which was common to the independent political units, and the alliances therein to better understand these units’ histories, relations to each other, as well as their relations to British Colonial Government and the contemporary Ugandan State.
Atkinson (1994) concludes that the Acoli are a combination of what he terms Luo, Central Sudanic, and Eastern Nilotic acephalous lineages, sub-clans, and clans, that due to drought, and political influence from Bunyoro-Kitara to the south, and through the mediation of Luo speaking Palwo in the borderlands, became Acoli by the eighteenth century. Oloya corroborates this idea, and specifically highlight the droughts as change agents, stating, “the formation of kaka as governing organizations became a grand attempt to form collective efforts to address these forms of extremities” (2015:146-7).

Members of Pabwoc, elders and youth alike, believe that they are descendants of Shilluk, a Luo people, who originated in Rumbek, Sudan. The Luo are a group of linguistically linked peoples (what is called by some the Nilotic language group) who now live in Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Northern Uganda, the Mara region of Tanzania, and Western Kenya. As Sverker Finnström wrote, most Acoli people today identify as Luo (2008:36). The “Shilluk migration” (Girling 1960), which probably brought Pabwoc’s ancestors closer to present day Uganda, began around 1700, and as

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76 Paul M.L. Owot supports this assertion, saying that Bobi joined the Pamot dynasty at Atango, and that the Bobi came from Shilluk, and were part of the Luo groups of the Padibe (1976:190). Pelligrini agrees (1963:9). Other historical textual references, however, are unclear and contradictory on this matter. Atkinson refers to a Pabwoc lineage who was Central Sudanic (Madi) speaking, possibly joining Pabo Chiefdom (2010 215 fn42). Crazzolara describes Luo origins of Bobi as “additional modern fabrications” (1954:500), and like Atkinson, concludes probable Central Sudanic (Madi) origins for Bobi.

77 See Cooper 2011 for a detailed description of Luo historiography, particularly in reference to Luoland in Western Kenya.

78 This may be in part attributed to primary school teachings that recount that the Acoli are a Luo Nilotic group that originated in Rumbek, Bar-El-Ghazel. They are also taught in school that they split into two groups, the Acoli and Alur, through the story of Labongo and Gipir. The famed story of Labongo and Gipir, though known to residents of Pabwoc, was learned in Primary school, and not from within their own families.
explored by Martiniello (2015) was possibly exacerbated by profound changes in the systems of land tenure in Sudan at that time.

Pabwoc elders recount that Bobi first left his original area and settled at Kiyugi at Mount Okol, which is in Wanglengo. Generally, his descendants moved to the mountain of Lamwo, from Lamwo they moved to Ogul, and from Ogul they moved to Lalak Hill in a place called Piringali. They then moved to Lacic hill, and then settled around Lacic at Lujaro.

According to Atkinson’s work, from the time that Bobi reached the mountain of Lamwo, his descendants would have encountered and had alliances with either Kaka Pocu–which demised in the mid-eighteenth century, and Kaka Paloga, which gained prominence thereafter (Atkinson 1994:247). These kaka were never mentioned in the oral histories however, which might support Owot’s report that Bobi actually joined Padibe in the middle of the 1700s, much earlier than Ogwok’s time. Despite these discrepancies of the timeline, the affiliation that is recounted and that bears upon contemporary dispute resolution and social organization (see Chapter 5), is Bobi’s alliance with Kaka Padibe, said by the elders to have happened under Rwot Ogwok (but as already stated may have occurred much earlier), whose settlements at the end of the nineteenth century were known to be at Lalak and Lacic.

79 The only reference I have found is to a stream named Wanglengo in Sudan almost at the border with Uganda (Google Earth Pro).
80 Although not mentioned by Pabwoc elders when speaking of this history, it was also in Rwot Ogwok’s reign, around 1898, that Major MacDonald of the Imperial British Corporation signed “treaties” with a number of Rwodi, including Rwot Ogwok of Padibe (Oloya 2015:11).
3.2.2 The scattering of Bobi

The elders of Pabwoc agree that it was in Lujaro near Lacic hill, under Rwot Ogwok, that the biggest scattering of Bobi finally occurred. Some recall an argument whereby a member of Pabwoc (Bobi clan) was arrested by a member of Oyo (also of the Bobi clan). I also encountered memories of a measles and smallpox outbreak at that time which generally dispersed the united clans of Kaka Padibe from the hilly area. The People of Bwoc started moving away from Lujaro and they came to Ngom Otyer. From Ngom Otyer they moved to Te Poyo (a big tree) and settled briefly at Lapyang, the site of a borehole in neigbouring Lumura Village. After that brief moment they finally moved to Agolo, present day Pabwoc. They were led by Lodwaramoi, who received permission to move to these lands from Rwot Madikiloc, but who also warned of possible old shrines of a Lamwo clan in the area. Present day Pabwoc was part of a vast hunting ground, under the authority of Rwot Madikiloc before settlement in the 1900s.

Around the time of the arrest incident at Lujaro, Bobi’s sub-clans began to scatter over Acoliland, and today, Bobi’s five kaka/sub-clans and their descendants are found in various areas around Acoliland and beyond, including Lamola/Akwang, Lamit, Akwang, Kitgum

81 Owot recounts that Bobi first split up quite a bit earlier when some first joined Pamot, while others continue moving southwards (1976:190).

82 But as assured by elders, and by texts alike, it was quite normal for clans to split into sub-clans, and sub-clans into lineages. It was also normal that as a result of, and to avoid conflict, groups separated and “scattered” to different areas (Oloya 2015:164). This idea of “fission” is also discussed in classic ethnographic accounts such as Evans-Pritchard’s Nuer (1965) and in Girling (1960:56).
Matidi, Tegot Akara, Ataga/Lacek-ocot, Puranga, Awac, Pabo, Awere, Omoro and Pajok (South Sudan) (Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation 2014, O’Byrne 2015). As I will explore in Chapter 5, strong identification with Kaka Bobi continues to have significant impact on contemporary social organization in Pabwoc.

Aside from historical connections between various kin-based communal governance organizations, and the nature of political affiliation in Acoliland, it is most important to note that since the “scattering”, estimated to have occurred gradually throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s, and the subsequent settlement at Agolo (present day Pabwoc), the people of Pabwoc have remained, notably through Colonial rule and subsequent post-colonial governmental violences and upheaval, on the same land.

Although there are references to earlier historical displacement of the general Acoli population by Arab slave traders between 1823 and 1899 (Oloya 2015:133), and by British Colonial authorities between 1894 and 1962, specifically in Western Acoliland (Branch 2011:48, Girling 1960:175), this was not the case in Pabwoc, part of Padibe. Partially, this can be attributed to the Kaka Padibe, under Rwot Ogwok, allying itself early on for survival (he was outmatched by their guns) with the kuturia, the trading, including slave-trading Arabs, as they were called (see Baker 1886 for an early written mention). As p’Bitek and Bere both write however, the Arabs exploited existing animosity between the kaka (p’Bitek

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83 I was able to estimate the date because Enoji, the oldest man in the Padibe sub-counties, was born in 1917 at Lujaro, and Owot (1976:207) speaks of how Ogwok and “Padibe” moved to their present day location around 1917. This would indicate earliest movement beginning after Enoji’s birth, in the latter part of 1917.
1971:135), and developed kaka antagonisms where none existed before (Bere 1947:6). The British had similar tactics, as Owot notes, and now that Padibe was surrounded by enemies, “Ogwok was anxious to ally with the Europeans before his enemies did so” (1976:207). These alliances also explain the growth and power of Ogwok’s Kaka Padibe, as many of the surrounding clans and sub-clans sought the protection that the Kaka Padibe’s alliances (first with the Arabs, then with the British) offered.

The very low population density in Padibe, its extreme hot and dry climate compared with Western and Southern Uganda, and its distance from the Colonial capital, also likely played into its continuing relative autonomy. Girling attributes the limited impact of Colonial “measures” (hut tax, implementations of cash crops, missions, and Acoli councils) on social and economic change in Acoliland due to the low population density (1960:183). All to emphasize that, unlike the effects of the Arabs, British Colonialism, and post-independence violences of the past century–which were profound in different ways85–the displacement of Pabwoc’s people into IDP camps from the most recent LRA-Government war deeply

84 According to the Rwot of Padibe in 2012, John Odoki, Rwot Ogwok (his great grandfather) and the people of Padibe soon saw that the Arabs treated people very badly, through the slave trade. Yet they were already bound to the traders. 
85 The effects of armament from the slave traders, Western English education and the church from Colonial intervention, as well as diseases (measles and smallpox), indeed had significant immediate and long-term consequences to the people of Pabwoc and Padibe generally. Most people in Pabwoc that did speak of these consequences (during the village survey or at the village debates) noted that the effects of early church practices, though powerful, did not completely interfere with indigenous social organization and indigenous knowledge that could be considered “religious.” However, the church’s schooling in English, education of their children by others, and having children occupied throughout the days away from the homesteads was still generally reflected upon as more detrimental to an Acoli way of life. More commonly, some elders trace what they refer to in a proverb as “copying brought death to the hare” (apora bot oneko apwoyo)–the phenomena of copying other ways of life and how it brings misery, what p’Bitek calls “aping” (2011) to these interventions of the church and the church’s bringing of “foreign” education.
affected sociality and social organization rooted in the ways of life specifically connected with the land in primarily subsistence farming-based communities.

### 3.2.3 Pabwoc in contemporary times

The first forced displacement of sons and daughters of Bwoc from their “ngom kwaro” or ancestral land began after LRA massacres in the area killed an estimated 450 people in early 1997 (JRP 2012, camp commander interview 2012). People mostly fled to Kitgum town, about 26 kilometres to the south. Although some residents returned to Pabwoc village in 1999, by 2003, all were forced by the UPDF into Padibe IDP camp, built around Padibe trading center, about eight kilometres north of Pabwoc. Although a more detailed history of Pabwoc’s experiences during the LRA-UPDF war will follow, I emphasize here Pabwoc residents’ uninterrupted settlement in their current location over roughly the past century. Despite the turmoil of Colonial rule which introduced new land holding systems, The Land Act of 1962 which gave government the right to alienate land, and the outlaw of customary tenure during Idi Amin’s reign, Pabwoc residents have continued to live on, and from, the land around the original settlement of Agolo since the 1920s. This continuous settlement, despite the many changes to national landholding laws, and the many violences associated with regime changes, is significant to the functioning and relevance of aspects of relatedness and tekwaro through these major historical and political-economic changes.

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86 The only violence spontaneously discussed from post-colonial Governments (other than the recent war) that affected Pabwoc was that Idi Amin forced adult males to perform “voluntary” labour. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the population did not suffer.
Pabwoc village (East and West) is bordered, approximately, on the northwest by the Nyuka Tobi River, on the northeast by the Lagwel River, and extending beyond the Okwelle and Ayago rivers to the south west and east respectively. The size of Pabwoc is an estimated eight square kilometers. The northern part of the village, especially the area closest to the Lagwel River is generally used for olet, communal cattle grazing. Homesteads and small gardens comprise the center of the village, and large tracts of farmlands, the gardens, lie to the south. Historically, and in present day, Kaka Bobi and other peoples in the area were agriculturalists, relying mostly on farming for subsistence. In addition, livestock, mostly goats and sheep but also cattle, were kept. Cattle became more important during Rwot Ogwok’s time due to trade and alliances with the Arabs (mid-late 1800’s), although their retreat, disease, occasional raids from Karamoja to the east, and the recent war has periodically wiped out the cattle population (Finnström 2008:192, Owot 1976:213). People of Pabwoc, and of the Padibe sub-counties, live year round, through both the dry and wet seasons, within their villages.

87 I hesitate to determine the exact boundaries here for many reasons. First, the rivers to the north are not exact boundaries. For example, there is a homestead that comprises over five households on the other side of the Lagwel River, and there are gravestones of Pabwoc members beyond the Nyuka Tobi. To the south, landmarks marking the boundaries include rocky outcroppings and swamps. As will be discussed later, the Rwot Kweri is responsible for knowledge about land boundaries, and in 2013, the entire community was invited to walk the village limits so that the knowledge could be passed down.

88 I calculated this for descriptive purposes only by using the boundaries described to me (by Morish Lanek, who was shown by Rwot Kweri) on Goggle Earth Pro.

89 There are three different communal gardens on the south side of Pabwoc: lugoyo, turwenya and otwoo (sometimes called ludongo otum).
Today, Pabwoc East and West villages are part of Lagwel parish, in Padibe West sub-county, Lamwo District, Northern Region of Uganda. They are also practically part of Kaka Bobi, Kal Kwaro Padibe, the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation (more in Chapter 5), and Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi. Each of these levels of governance comprises institutions, councils, committees, leaders, and procedures, with overlapping jurisdictions (which will explored in terms of land rights and conflict resolution specifically in this dissertation).

In addition, Pabwoc and Padibe are in what many consider eastern Acoli, or Acoli lumalo\(^90\) (Oloya 2015:369, Finnström 2008:33). As Finnström explores, compared to western Acoli (Acoli lupiny), many Acoli popularly believe that Acoli lumalo are “more traditional.” Oloya traces these attitudes to the fact that the British Colonial administrative center was established at Gulu, in Western Acoli. More development projects were pursued, as well as more control exerted in the form of tax collection and work programs with the nearer population in Western Acholi. Acoli \textit{lumalo} (west) and \textit{lupiny} (east) also reference internal differentiations that have historically caused conflict in Acoli, specifically the rivalry between the Payira and Padibe Chiefdoms (Oloya 2015:336, Owot 1976).

These differentiations between \textit{lumalo} and \textit{lupiny} may or may not hint at why I found kin-based communal governance still very much alive in Pabwoc, despite how British Colonialism, successive post-Colonial governments, and the LRA war has transformed traditional kin-based community governance (Branch 2010, Dolan 2009, Oloya 2015).

\(^{90}\) Acoli lumalo and lupiny are split by the Acuwa river (see Figure 8, pp.12).
*Lumalo* has historically been more distant to both British and post-colonial Governments, and is therefore arguably less affected by their various interventions described above. In regards kin-based communal governance organizations during the LRA-Gov’t war, Pabwoc elders, as well as Rwot Padibe, recounted that within the camps several levels of kin based communal governance were called upon to address various *kiir* (the intentional and unintentional breaking of social norms), as much as they were constrained by the confines of camp life. However, practices that fostered sub-clan unity, like the practices associated with *abila* (ancestral shrines) and *ayweya* (sub-clans’ “spirits”), were mostly impossible within the camp (depending on their location relative to the camp perimeter). Additionally, the spatial dimensions of IDP camp life hindered recognition of the sub-clan as a unit, distinctly manifest and prominent in the spatial dimensions of the village (this will be further explored in Chapter 4). Yet, although contemporary kin-based communal governance has undoubtedly been transformed over the years due to historical events and calamities, including the recent war, as all living cultural practices are transformed through time, I learned much about its persistent relevance to everyday life, social organization, and relatedness as a whole (particularly regarding land rights, conflict resolution, marriage practices, and personhood) despite these transformations. I include this discussion of the historical differences between *lumalo* and *lupiny* to draw further attention to the specifics of locality explored in this study.

The next section narrates the experiences of Pabwoc sub-clan/village, and my host family, through the recent LRA-Government war. A description of daily life in 2012, two to three
years after return from displacement follows. Exploring the inseparability of land from Acoli notions of relatedness, I consider how work on the land, specifically inter-generational participation and engagement in the work, imagines, forges, regulates, and I assert, also repairs relations in contemporary post-conflict and post-displacement contexts.

3.3 “Moving Up and Down Unsettles the Mind”

I was often told that the land is *pire tek* (very important) to all aspects of *tekwaro pa Acoli*, and learned how this ideal is both realized spatially and is practiced in daily life through Acoli *kit me kwo* (ways of life) and *tic Acoli* (Acoli work) connected to the land. As explored further in Chapter 4, displacement to the camps fundamentally undermined parental and elder authority and strengthened NGO and Government influence and power (Branch 2011, Dolan 2009, Oloya 2015). But displacement from the land, from the village, and from Acoli *kit me kwo* and *tic Acoli*, from the subsistence farming way of life, had other more subtle, and devastating consequences connected with how a loss of land destabilizes social philosophy or indigenous legal orders (Turner 2014, Niezen 2009). This section describes Pabwoc residents’ displacements, and their move to Padibe IDP camp.

We went to the camp in Kitgum, then came home, then soon went to the camp in the center. It has made people’s minds to be up and down. And moving up and down unsettles the mind. It has been difficult to learn *tekwaro*, and it has changed us all. It was difficult because the time where we should be learning *tekwaro*, there was just no time. Because the LRA were disturbing. We were moving all the time, and even
sleeping in the bush. We would come back home for just a minute, but then we
would have to leave and take refuge again. We did not know what home was
anymore. (Reagan, a son of Bwoc. 18 years old)

As introduced in the previous section, in early 1997, after a series of massacres in Lamwo
county (Lamwo District today) claimed 450 lives,\textsuperscript{91} about 95% of the residents of Pabwoc
East first fled their village lands.\textsuperscript{92} Of that total, about 60% fled to Kitgum town 20
kilometers to the south, and mostly sought refuge in Public Primary school there (it was
offered by Government as a place of refuge). 30% sought refuge in nearby (8 km away)
Padibe trading center. My host family had the means to rent a room in Kitgum town (Baba
is a teacher), and did not stay in Public Primary School.

Villages in Padibe sub-county that were closer to Padibe trading center mostly sought
refuge at the two primary schools there, and according to Nokrac Fidensio (the Padibe IDP
camp commander from 1997 through to its closing in 2008), Padibe IDP camp started on
January 25\textsuperscript{th}, 1997.\textsuperscript{93} As more people throughout Lamwo County (including the sub-
counties of Padibe, Palabek, Lokung, Agaro, Madi-opei, and Paluga) and elsewhere in the
district sought refuge in Kitgum town, the government transferred the ever-growing

\textsuperscript{91} According to a JRP report (2012) on the massacre in Palabek, part of Lamwo County, the LRA
were killing people in the area as revenge for hunters’ collaboration with the UPDF. The hunters
looked into caves for LRA activity, and reported any ammunition or activity seen. Although no one
from Pabwoc was killed, residents of the whole area fled in fear of the increased activity.
\textsuperscript{92} Of the two homesteads that remained in Pabwoc East, one lived on the other side of the river, by
the military detach and felt secure enough to remain. The other said that he alone from his
homestead remained back to take care of the livestock.
\textsuperscript{93} I interviewed Nokrac Fidensio, IDP camp commander, on Sept.13\textsuperscript{th}, 2012.
displaced population, including most sons and daughters of Bwoc, to *gang dyang* (literally, house of the cows, still in Kitgum town), where tents were provided by UNHCR.

According to the village survey conversations, as many as six households lived together in one large tent at Gang Dyang in early 1997, and due to the severe overcrowding and insufficient hygienic facilities, cholera soon broke out. No one from Pabwoc, however, died from cholera. The government then instituted the policy that “protected villages” (internally displaced people’s (IDP) camps) would be set-up outside of the main towns, closer to the countryside, and Padibe IDP camp was fully established in 1998. Most residents of Pabwoc moved directly to Padibe IDP camp at that time, while some remained in Kitgum town. There was a lull in LRA activity in the area from 1999 to 2002, and about 30% of the Pabwoc population returned to their village at this time before a second, more prolonged displacement. My host family also moved back to Pabwoc at this time, before the longer move to Padibe IDP camp, 3 years later. Many people in Pabwoc recounted that life was very difficult as the fields had been left for a few years while away, animals had been looted, and houses needed to be repaired and rebuilt. However, they say that in retrospect rebuilding after that first displacement was relatively easy compared to returning after the second, more prolonged absence from 2003 to 2008-9 (depending on individual families’ circumstances).

94 At that time, there was only one other camp in Lamwo County—in Palabek. Lukung IDP camp was later established in 1999, and Paluga in 2004, and there were subsequent reductions in the camp population at Padibe.
95 These displacements are noted in the timeline, attached as Appendix C.
LRA activity in Padibe sub-county, especially abductions and killings, increased in 2002-3, and according to the village survey, over 1/3 of Pabwoc households’ experienced abductions of one or more members at this time. One of Baba’s sisters was also killed in an LRA attack at that time. After a particularly close call in 2003 during heavy rains that had my host family on the run from an LRA attack, on the dangerously full and raging Lagwel river–Mama with a baby on her back and Baba with children in his arms—they finally moved to Padibe IDP camp. For this second displacement, Baba still remained at home with a few animals, however a couple of months later, the government—through the military—declared that everyone found outside the camp would be considered a rebel or a rebel collaborator. At this point, everyone who had remained or resettled in Pabwoc after the first displacement, Baba included, and from everywhere in the countryside, was forced to move to the camp. Any food stores and animals that hadn’t been looted by the UPDF or

96 It was impossible for me to ascertain exactly how many people from Pabwoc East were abducted or killed without asking for their names because of the close relations of everyone in the village (people say their sister or brother, which refers to cousins as well). Meaning, everyone had a family member who had been abducted or killed because everyone within Pabwoc is “family.” Apparently The International Committee of the Red Cross had some information from a survey while they were still displaced in Padibe IDP camp, but the village itself had not undertaken such an endeavour. I, personally, did not want to make this “list”, if it had not been initiated by Pabwoc residents’ themselves. I am wary of the possible conflicts that can result from lists, as well as from precise maps for example. Additionally, I am sensitive to the possibilities that specifically asking people to recount experiences of violence may cause further violence. Neither the village survey, nor my personal conversations ever asked about the specific forms of violence that people individually experienced, particularly to avoid potentially reproducing effects of the violence experienced through testimonial types of narration (as explored extensively by Krog et al. 2009, Ross 2010, and Shaw 2007, as examples).

97 Branch and others point to displacement as a military strategy by the Government to quell popular LRA support (Branch 2011, Dolan 2009).
LRA were brought, but were soon used up or raided. And although Padibe camp was originally planned in 1997 with living space allocated by parish and village in the sub-county, people from neighbouring sub-counties also moved in. A severe lack of space at this point had people squeezing within the camp perimeter wherever they could.

Figure 22- Aceng Beatrice squeezes between huts in Padibe IDP Camp, 2006.

A fire earlier in the year had torn through the camp, burning most residents’ possessions and the straw-thatched roofs of the huts.

For long periods of time, sons and daughters of Bwoc, like other camp residents, were unable to access their land for any kind of activities. Pabwoc was also one of the villages that were quite far, relatively, from the camp, and from any main road (It takes about 1

98 Baba brought the goats to the camp outskirts, but they were quickly looted by UPDF. In sympathy, some people point out that soldiers were paid next to nothing and often suffered malnutrition along with camp residents.
hour to walk to Pabwoc from Padibe IDP camp, about 30 minutes of it through bush). In addition to the existing security threat by the LRA, at some times, if anyone was caught outside the camp perimeter, they would be identified as a rebel, and would be beaten, or shot and killed by Government forces (UPDF). In other periods, the restrictions would be lessened by the UPDF, however the danger of being abducted, beaten, or killed by the LRA still served to reduce people’s travels far from the camp, and obviously reduced/extinguished people’s work of the land. As one man I first met in 2004 exclaimed to me, “the LRA and the UPDF are just squeezing us until we all die” (personal communication in Palaro IDP camp 2004).

Security in the camp was, according to the Padibe camp commander, “not all that good”, however, he says that it was much better than having no camp at all. While most people in Pabwoc agreed that the camp was needed, they also lamented that more, and better, security and services were not provided. I was told of the laziness of the UPDF on many occasions, particularly in relation to a large attack on the camp by the LRA in 2003 with looting and abductions, which left 15 dead. After that, people recounted that they were encouraged to volunteer for, or were forced by UPDF into, what were called LDUs (Local Defense Units). Those who joined (youth, adults and even the elderly) were given guns and for some, a place to stay in the barracks. Many people in the Padibe sub-counties blame the

99 The one main road that now cuts the village in two was only made large (larger than a footpath) and maintained starting in 2011
100 At the beginning, there was one UPDF detach in the camp, then the Government opened four other detaches in the sub-county (at Abakadyak, Lumurra, Katum, and Tuluka), which he says helped matters.
LDUs for the death of a significant number of civilian adults and elders—as LC1s\textsuperscript{101} were also required to join (\textit{kabake} Katum 2012). In Pabwoc, approximately 15 men (including male youth) served in the LDUs, with two of them eventually joining the UPDF.

The World Food Program supplied Padibe IDP camp, and all the camps in the north, and other INGOs attempted to meet (but failed to meet) the burgeoning clean water and sanitation needs of the Padibe camp population that had swelled to 42 000 by 2003 (camp commander interview).\textsuperscript{102} The approximate size of Padibe IDP camp was .6 square kilometers\textsuperscript{103} (a population density of 70 000 people per square km, contrasted with Pabwoc’s population density in 2012 of 150 people per square kilometer). Although the Ugandan Government was technically responsible for the welfare of its citizens during displacement, it was the international humanitarian organizations that struggled to keep residents alive.\textsuperscript{104} For these reasons, as described in the introduction, many academics and policy makers call the forced displacement of the entire rural population and the resulting human rights abuses (lack of access to food, clean water, sanitation, medical supplies) in Northern Uganda a violation of international humanitarian law (Okello and Hovil 2007:437), social torture (Dolan 2009), egregious harm (Branch 2011), and genocide (Otunnu 2006) perpetrated by the Ugandan State.

\textsuperscript{101} LC1 refers to Local Councilor 1, and is the first point of contact between Government and communities. Each village in Uganda has an elected LC1. In Pabwoc East Village, the LC1 is a respected member of the community, elected based on attributes of leadership and fairness, not unlike \textit{Ladit Kaka} (the sub-clan leader). The LC1 in Pabwoc East is currently male.

\textsuperscript{102} A UN-OCHA published map from February 2006 puts the camp population at 35 006.

\textsuperscript{103} I estimate the size from a 2007 satellite image obtained from Google Earth Pro.

\textsuperscript{104} Dolan (2009) claims that the INGOS were like doctors in a torture situation—keeping the tortured just alive enough to endure the suffering.
A young boy I lived near in Padibe IDP camp (in 2008) once complained to me that there was no shade in the IDP camp. He said it was the worst part of living there. I have often thought about this, and what shade, or the presence of a tree to sit under, to talk under, to work under, and to learn under means.

As I will explore in the next section, a return to village lands necessitated the *tic Acoli* (Acoli work) that could make home a sustainable place once again. I discuss how the organizing principles of (survival in) home life enact inter-generational activities that themselves work to re-activate kin-based social relations and social organization, and multi-generational engagement in *tekwaro*. And that this return to the land therefore re-elaborates relatedness, and thus performs social repair. As emphasized by Bodenhorn (1990, 2000), Brightman (1993), Nadasdy 2002, Tanner (1979), Todd (2014), Turner and Turner (2008), and others, food production is integral to both the transmission of indigenous knowledge, and in continuously creating and re-creating social relations, organization, and community. The socio-spatial configurations of the camp, including residents’ dependence on the WFP, affecting not only daily survival, but also relatedness, and engagements with *tekwaro* itself. In the same way, a return to the socio-spatial conditions of the village lands, of home, had its own effects on relatedness and engagements with *tekwaro*.
3.4 *Gang–Village, Home*

The most recent peace talks began in Juba, South Sudan in July of 2006 and broke off in the first half of 2008. A ceasefire was negotiated by September of 2006, and Government and the international NGOs that serviced the IDP camps began encouraging people to re-settle in their “original” or traditional villages, or as some authorities stated, “return to where the war found you” (Whyte et al. 2014:605). When I visited Padibe IDP camp that December 2006, everyone still lived in the camp. And in my village survey of Pabwoc East in 2012, I found that no one actually moved back to the village permanently until late 2008 due to: fear, land claims, and the hard work necessary to make home sustainable again.105

Primarily, people seriously doubted that the ceasefire would hold. As evidenced by their history, many had moved back to Pabwoc before during a lull in the violence (around 1999), only to suffer much loss, terror, abduction, death, and forced displacement back to the camp again some few years later. Also, what people found back in their homes when they were able to visit contributed to the general fear. Land mines and unexploded ordinances posed grave threats, and unburied bones left some sites haunted by *cen*, spirits of those who had been killed or died without proper burial.106 These *cen*, as I will further explore in Chapter 5, haunt the person who has killed, the killer’s sub-clan members (even generations to come), as well as anyone who may happen to come upon, unknowingly or

105 Many began cultivation or fetching firewood, however, as soon as they were willing to risk it. Also, I detail later, some moved to smaller “satellite” camps within their parishes, in the case of Lagwel Parish, near Lagwel Primary school in Lumura village.

knowingly, the disrespected body. One can only be cleansed of cen by following specific cik Acoli (laws and rituals), organized by elders of the sub-clan. Significantly, when I asked Beatrice if she was anxious to leave the camp with her husband in the summer of 2008 for example, she replied that she actually feared leaving, and that she doubted that there would really be peace, because she had never known it in all her life.

Second, many people’s rights to the land were in question. As will be further discussed in Chapter 4, women’s and children land rights were jeopardized by the disruption to traditional courtship practices, and the resulting failure to activate the network of social relations which sanctioned land rights, during displacement. Other people found their rights to access land cut off due to “missing links” (Whyte et al. 2012) as a result of the deaths of the people through whom they accessed their rights under customary land tenure (husband, parent, etc.). Also, youth who had grown up during the displacement (in camps or in towns), perhaps without their parents, did not know the boundaries of their land or the bundle of responsibilities and obligations entailed.

In other instances, people had lived and farmed on another sub-clan’s land before displacement. Historically, Acoli customary land tenure accounted for many “guests” rights to land (Girling 1960, Hopwood 2015), including friends, business partners, or maternal relations. After displacement however, peoples’ rights to access land became stricter or narrower. As Peters (2009:1321) describes in general regarding land conflict:
Much research has documented that a key socio-cultural dynamic driving the differentiation over land turns on a narrowing in the definition of belonging. Social conflict over land produces stricter definitions of those with legitimate claims to resources, i.e., group boundaries become more exclusively defined.

In Pabwoc, there was one case where a man’s son wanted to access land where his deceased father had lived before the war. Although the father (and son) was not of Pabwoc (not a descendant of Bwoc, nor having married into the sub-clan), before the war his family had enjoyed rights to live there. Upon return, however, he was referred back to his own sub-clan to access his “rightful” land, by the sub-clan leader (Ladit Kaka) and executive council of Pabwoc. The son took the matter to the LCII courts (Parish), which settled in favour of Pabwoc. In addition, I found in the village survey that about 10% of current Pabwoc residents had actually lived outside of Pabwoc before the war, like this man. Since the disbandment of the camps however, they moved back to Pabwoc, where they had “rightful” access through customary land tenure because, as one woman said, “these things are more strict now—the people from there told us to go home.” This “narrowing in the definition of belonging” has several explanations. Some residents say that the population increase while in the camp contributes to these factors. However, Lamwo district still has one of the lowest population density rates in the country (Lamwo 30.6/km² vs. Uganda 188/km²; Human Rights Focus 2013). Others attribute it to peoples’ exposure to Western
capitalist ideals of land ownership in the camps, and awareness of the monetary value of land.\textsuperscript{107}

While monetization factors undoubtedly contribute, I believe it is important to acknowledge these processes of "strictness" as part of the processes of organizing people into groups with a strong material symbol to ground re-ordering or re-engagement with tekwaro, with human-land relations, with relatedness itself. These relations were severely damaged by the violences of the war and displacement to the IDP camps, evident in certain respects through the proliferation of land conflicts immediately upon return. These conflicts, though some were violent, served as sites for these redefinitions, and as concluded by Atkinson and Hopwood (2013), kin-based communal governance has provided the resolutions to the majority of them. The strictness then, works towards re-establishing a functional, participatory morality of relatedness, and the attending systems of kin-based communal governance, partially through what James C. Scott describes as "legibility" (1999). Scott describes legibility as practices aimed at establishing social control and authority, and I believe that the "narrowing definitions of belonging", or a return to the stricter genealogical factors (descent) of land tenure is aimed at addressing the dis-order from the war and displacement years in rural Acoli. As such, they can be viewed as practices aimed at re-elaborating relatedness, of making home living again, and of performing social repair. I will explore this notion particularly in Chapter 5 in the

\textsuperscript{107} With the extreme poverty of the displacement years, some desperately want to sell their land claims, which is against communal customary tenure.
context of Pabwoc’s initiative to become a non-profit foundation, partially in hopes of securing land rights from threats of a proliferation of large-scale commercial and national land grabs in Acoliland.

In addition to fear and complex land rights issues described above, a third reason why people took time to return was that much hard work needed to be done in order to move back home, to make the village habitable, and the farming life sustaining again after, more or less, a decade of neglect. For example, homesteads had to be cleared from the bush, and bamboo and grasses had to be collected and dried to build the actual houses. Wells and boreholes had to be checked, repaired, and drilled anew if necessary. Gardens had to be dug, planted etc. Firewood had to be collected.

The growing season thus also greatly figured in people’s timing of their moves. In Pabwoc, and all of Padibe sub-counties, the dry season runs from November to March, and while it is the ideal time to collect much needed building materials and firewood, for example, not much field preparation can be done. Certainly, crops cannot be sown until the rains in April and harvested at the very earliest in July (maize usually is ready first, but millet, the staple crop is only ready around September). Much work over the annual farming cycle of a year therefore had to be done for a minimally producing garden. And the income necessary to supplement diets with commercial goods was simply out of people’s reach. Although some INGOs gave out seeds, hoes, and some livestock, the needs of the vast population of displaced rural people far outnumbered the programs, especially in rural areas away from
the city centers. Coupled with the real security fear of moving far away from the camp for prolonged periods of time necessary to farm, most sons and daughters of Bwoc were still necessarily dependent on food aid from the still overcrowded and squalid camps in the first years after the cease-fire.

In my host family, Baba began collecting materials (bamboo) to build houses back in the village in November 2007, about a year after the ceasefire, when he believed it was safer to access the land. At that time, he and one of his brothers built two small houses, in the middle of what is now the homestead (in 2012, they served as the main kitchen house and the storeroom and girls' bedroom house). Mama and the aunties began collecting firewood soon after, clearing the homestead, and in the new agricultural year, field preparation began in earnest. At this time, Mama and the children (and most other residents of Lamwo county) were still living in the camp. Although there were no more LRA attacks (the last reported one in the sub-counties was in spring of 2007 (personal communications with camp commander), there were a number of Boo Kec, or bandits. These incidents lessened as more people returned home, and kin-based communal governance organizations (sub-clans, lineages) were able to provide better security for their extended families (more on these aspects of kin-governance in Chapter 5). The government and INGOs urged residents to leave the camps, and organized smaller “decongestion” or “satellite” camps closer to people’s lands. Although more popular with residents’ of villages located close to these smaller camps, there were about five families from Pabwoc that moved to the “decongestion” camp at Lagwel (along the main road to Kitgum) before returning home.
Although the ceasefire had been signed in September 2006, Kony and Museveni failed to sign the final peace agreement in April 2008. Despite the disappointment, the ceasefire held, and finally, in late 2008, Mama and her children returned to live in Pabwoc. According to the village survey, approximately 90% of residents returned to Pabwoc East by 2009. It was hard going, according to personal conversations. Primary school children walked to the closest school at Lagwel (about 2-2.5 km depending on location in village), however its high student to teacher ratio (400 to 6 in 2012), had many walking the eight kilometres to the center to attend better schools there. The four primary school age children in our homestead walked daily to and from the center to attend Catholic school there.108

By the time I visited my host family in Pabwoc East in 2012, children and youth (for the most part) participated in their family’s subsistence farming activities, learning the rhythms and work (tic Acoli) of village life in order to help their families’ survive.109

Upon return to Pabwoc, land was informally allotted to residents (through birth and marriage) according to smaller familial (households) histories of land use. For example, my host family returned to the place of their pre-war homestead, and began cultivating in

108 The youngest daughter, Ayaa, boarded there.
109 Despite many complaints regarding youth in the camp, most children and youth were learning to farm, and through this work also began to learn the boundaries of their land, as well as their sub-clan and clan histories. On the other hand, there were still some youth who refused/refuse to farm and remained/remain in the center. Branch discusses the specific urban qualities of the different IDP camps (Branch 2013), and cites Norman Mao (District Council Chairman in 2006) when he argued that young people who had grown up in the semi-urban environments of the camps should continue to “enjoy” a more urban lifestyle.
roughly the same gardens that they used before the displacements. The *Rwot Kweri* (and sometimes the land council) of Pabwoc is consulted by residents if there is a need for more or different gardening plots, or new homestead spaces not previously occupied by the residents’ immediate families. The *Rwot Kweri* is also consulted in the case of any internal or neighbouring land related disputes.

*Rwot Kweri* is an elected position within Pabwoc (and other sub-clans throughout Acoliland; see Atkinson and Hopwoood 2013 for the ubiquity of the role), and the person is chosen because of their knowledge of the histories of internal land use, as well as their expertise on the village boundaries. The *Rwot kweri’s* knowledge, along with heads of households, lineage (Ocuga, Otuna, Abonga) and sub-clan (Pabwoc) executive councils, and the land council, plays a decisive role in the allocation of village lands, yet decisions are always first made in relation to prior use. At a family meeting during my stay in 2012, Mama urged Okot (her 4th born son) to start digging in the gardens. It was believed that he had wasted his school fees (on clothes and a cell phone), dropped out of school as a result, and was spending a lot of time in the center. She pleaded, “if you do not come dig, if we do not use the land, someone else will come and use it. If you ever do want to come back, it will then be very hard to get the land.”

In late 2013 Pabwoc’s executive council asked the *Rwot Kweri* to lead a two-day walking tour of the boundaries of Pabwoc to better acquaint all residents with the village lands. Everyone interested was invited to attend, especially the young men and boys, and about...
30 people joined the tour to see and hear about their village’s histories and locations of land use. The land boundary-walking event, which is significant but singular, and being back in the village on ngom kwaro generally, spatially delineates the village and makes extended familial relations (sub-clan, lineage) apparent and visible. This spatial delineation of the village informs residents’ sense of history and provides the ground, so to speak, for the *kit me kwo* (ways of life) of *tic Acoli* (Acoli work) that works to ground inter-generational knowledge transmissions and learning, and strengthen inter-sub-clan relations through necessitated cooperation and participation. As narrated below, extended family (lineage or sub-clan) farming, household maintenance through labour activities, and the slow resurgence of *wang oo*, as examples, once again provided a daily framework that delineated familial, gendered, and generational interactions and relations, and that re-elaborated relatedness itself, performing social repair. Although these practices transformed with time, and with the changes in the war years, the very quotidian inter-generational activities anchored in the land, or in human-land relations, are indeed the basis for practices that gathered people together, re-elaborated an Acoli indigenous legal order and thus performed social repair in post-displacement and post-conflict rural contexts.
3.5 Pabwoc in 2012, 3 Years After Return

Figure 23- The “new” road that bisects Pabwoc, 2012.

Pabwoc East village lies about eight kilometers south of the former Padibe IDP Camp, and current Padibe town council. The approximate population of Pabwoc East is 600. While officially two villages, Pabwoc East and West’s land is held in common by members of Kaka Pabwoc, part of Kaka Bobi. As narrated earlier, within Pabwoc East and West, there are three dog ot (I'll call them lineages) each with their own elected leader and councils, yet there is only one elected sub-clan leader (Ladit Kaka) of the whole of Pabwoc. Pabwoc is also a member of the Kaka Bobi clan (whose affiliated villages are spread all over Acoliland), and part of Kaka Padibe Chiefdom (Kal Kwaro Padibe). There is one Rwot Kweri for both Pabwoc East and West, who adjudicates land use among village residents, and one

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110 The trading center officially became a town council in 2011, but only functionally in 2012 when elections were finally held.

宪法，创建于2014年。大多数治理问题涉及日常生存和社会组织，包括土地利用、继承和分配、婚姻禁止和规范，以及纠纷解决，皮博克东和西的村庄作为亲缘关系的基于社区的治理组织——卡卡皮博克 functioning as one indigenous kin-based communal governance organization—Kaka Pabwoc。然而，皮博克东和西各自有自己的LC1s，是“地方”政府的立法机构。

2012年，皮博克东有三座铁皮屋顶的砖结构，大多数住宅由泥土建造，屋顶为茅草屋。没有电力，也没有安装太阳能的房屋。当时有可靠的手机信号——第一个塔在2008年安装在Padibe中心。

112 114 在2014年，该氏族的一个倡议是成为基金会，他们创建了一个宪法，详细规定了成员的权利和责任以及决策过程。社区在2015年接受了这一提议，并于2015年4月举行了选举。我出席了那次次氏族会议。请参见第5章了解更多信息。

113 114 在2015年，皮博克东供水由一井水井，许多家庭使用皮博克西的水井。

115 在2008年以前，只有某些运营商才能可靠地到达Padibe。

115 2014年新钻了一口井，以替换皮博克东那口破损的井。
Figure 24- Borehole in Pabwoc West, shared by all residents of Pabwoc. Pabwoc, 2012.

Photo by Ryan Gauvin, reproduced here with his permission.

There were 48 homesteads (extended family residences), comprising 147 households at the time of my research in 2012, for a total of about 600 people. A household is reckoned according to what the LC1 described as, “a house with its own cooking fire” (personal communication 2012). Examples of homesteads’ households include: a couple and their children; co-wives and their children; aunties (daughters of Bwoc who returned or remained due to bad treatment while away, divorce, fertility issues); aunties and their children; a couple, their children, and the wife’s mother. There is quite a bit of land between most homesteads, with small gardens that are used as nursery beds, and for pumpkins, greens, and tomatoes.

The homestead where I lived comprised ten houses—all mud huts with thatched-straw roofs. Mama and Baba had one sleeping house (where the youngest son Bwoc Simon slept as well), Augustine had a bachelor house (although he also had a room in the center), Geoff
and Oyo (two sons) slept in another house, and Okot (another son) slept in another when he was also not in the center. Pacoto Innocent, (another son) who returned on school vacations, slept with the boys. In addition to Augustine’s immediate family, Baba’s sisters (Augustine’s aunts) Ataro Santina and Alal Rose both had their own houses (cooking and sleeping in one), and Rose had a storeroom house as well. Rose, who did not have children of her own, was raising Alanyo, her brother’s (and Baba’s brother’s) daughter because her mother had died in childbirth. Santina was alone, divorced, but partway through my fieldwork her daughter, Docus, who became pregnant came back to live with her. As I write this, her daughter and granddaughter remain living with her.

Figure 25- Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya’s Homestead’s Residents, 2012.

116 During my stay, I also had a house. As explained in Chapter 2, I had sent funds to build a house in December 2011, so that I had a place to stay (which my husband shared with me for 2 months), and to contribute to the family’s rebuilding efforts.
Figure 26- Three of the ten houses in Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya’s homestead. Pabwoc, 2012.
Photo by Ryan Gauvin, reproduced here with his permission.

Figure 27- Sketch of the homestead of Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc, 2012.
My host family’s homestead.
Both Rose and Santina resided with Baba and his immediate family before displacement. In addition, there were two small houses in the center of the homestead (the first ones built upon return); one was now mama’s main cooking house, and the other (facing it) functioned as a storeroom (before they built a separate one in 2013), a dining area when raining, and the girls’ bedroom. Although Mama and Baba’s youngest daughter Ayaa Proscobia was “boarding” in school at Padibe Girls Catholic School in the center, Aciro (the LC1s daughter, who is part of the same Ocuga lineage) lived with the family as a de-facto member because “Mama needed help because she had so few girls and so many boys” (conversation with LC1 in 2012). There were also three graves located near the cooking house, adjacent to the area where wang oo is practiced (please see figure 27 above for a sketch of the homestead).

Figure 28- The graves and wang oo area in Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya's homestead. Pabwoc, 2012.
My host family's homestead is one of the large ones in Pabwoc, and is quite close to the edge of the gardens on the southern side of the village.

3.5.1  Kit me kwo–ways of life

A typical day in Pabwoc, in post-war and post-displacement 2012, starts early for its residents. Most people rise before sunrise, around 5:30 a.m. A quick tea is made by the women, whomever has a cooking fire usually makes and consumes “tea” on their own, and the houses and the homestead get a thorough sweeping (usually by the youngest able-bodied person around).

By 6:30 a.m. the children begin walking to the center for school (takes over an hour), Baba leaves (by bicycle if not broken) to teach in the technical school in the center, and the women have put beans or peas on the fire for lunch (if they have them), and leave for the gardens (depending on the season, their activities in the gardens change). Village men also garden, and likewise leave at an early hour. Women (and men as the case may be) usually return from the garden anywhere between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. (again, depending on the season), and usually prepare/serve/eat lunch. In periods of heavy agricultural work, especially the harvests, people remain in the fields all day and women often travel to help extended relations in other villages.

The afternoon is usually reserved for attending to building, village matters, socializing, and meetings for the men, and fetching water and preparing foodstuff (sorting, grinding etc.)
for the women. The children usually arrive home (from school in the center) by around 5 p.m. The boys are expected to round up the goats and other animals (ducks, pigs) and prepare the center of the homestead for wang oo—the nightly bonfire (they sweep the center of the homestead and chop, place, and light the fire for the evening time). The girls may fetch more water, wash dirty dishes, and help prepare the evening meal.

The sun sets at about 6 p.m., and the boys and young men start to gather around the fire. Santina and Rose cook their own dishes (as did I if I had time) and contribute them to Mama’s dishes to create a communal meal taken by all households of the homestead together at wang oo. If it rained, and depending who was around, meals would be taken inside, usually split into at least two houses, usually by gender. In heavy rains and if few were around, people would eat in small groups in the houses where they slept.

At communal wang oo, generally, men and male youth sit on chairs, and women, girls, and young boys sit on mats on the ground—unless there are fewer men, then the women sit on chairs (and if there were fewer women too, then the children sit on the chairs). Everyone washes their hands using soap, a pitcher of water, and a basin (usually a girl—sometimes myself—kneels in front and helps to pour water over people’s hands to rinse off the soap). Catholic grace, in Acoli and sometimes English, is said before the meal. The men’s “section” serves to individual plates from common serving dishes. The women’s section usually all eat together from their own set of serving dishes (without individual plates). In the men’s section, the eldest present serves himself first, and so on down the line.
News of the day is shared at wang oo, and it is a gathering time for conversation.\textsuperscript{117} Wang oo happened in the homestead every night that was dry, with no rain. When Uncle Pacoto would visit, he would recount ododo (folk tales) and quiz everyone with koc-lit (riddles).

According to p’Bitek’s description of wang oo:

For the young, the nightly storytelling sessions in front of the fire functioned as entertainment, oral education and training in the art of self-expression and oratory.

For the old, the sessions served as a way to safely accuse one of undesirable behaviour, and bad character traits, and were a means of social control (1964:22).

I had to leave Pabwoc for about a week in June while my house was being sprayed for fleas. I remember many wang oo, but particularly the first one I attended after missing a few.

Baba had news about the man who had stolen a cell phone in Pabwoc, as well as news about the missing, and now found, cow in a neighbouring village. The man who stole a cell phone, a resident of Pabwoc, still did not admit it. It was decided (by local kin-councils who met in the late afternoon, after gardening, but usually before supper) to give him a few weeks to admit his wrongdoing, and to pay for a replacement. In the meantime, no one within the village should have dealings with him. For the cow, it had gone missing from a neighbouring village. After searching, it was found quite a distance from the village, tied up in the bush. The owners of the cow assembled a team of adult men from surrounding villages to wait by the cow so that they could catch (and beat) the thief, presumably from

\textsuperscript{117} As is the dinner table or setting in many places around the world.
another village. The thief had still not returned. Mama spoke next, reporting that their pig (who had run away) was still not found, and that the neighbor (from the same lineage) wanted to talk to Baba because it had eaten some of their crops. Baba said he would go in the morning, but lamented that if only Okot had built the pigpen when he was asked, none of this would be happening. Santina also had news about her daughter’s upcoming visit. I also gave updates on the situation with my family in Vancouver—my 6-month old niece was in the hospital with bone fractures, but she was improving. They also wanted to know when Ryan, my husband, was arriving, and whether my professor (Dr. Baines) was still coming to visit. Wang oo functioned like this, a place where people recounted the events or news of the day, and a place to openly discuss matters that affected the group. It was through these nightly encounters that I began to better understand what I observed in daily village life, including local approaches to crime and conflict resolution, neighbourly relations, agricultural planning, event planning, and even courtship practices.

Wang oo is where I learned a significant amount about tekwaro pa Acoli, about Acoli social philosophy, relatedness, and the workings and politics of kaka social organization, as well as everyday life. In this way, wang oo indeed acted as a classroom, and is a cornerstone of indigenous Acoli education (Ocitti 1973). Far more frequent than folktales, although they were sometimes exchanged, problems within the family, issues with neighbours, village domestic disputes, economic troubles, event planning, and extended family consultations
were all discussed at wang oo.\textsuperscript{118} I believe this to be so partly because inter-gender and inter-generational activities were quite rare at our homestead in Pabwoc. Most time is spent with one’s own gender and/or age group, although there are no formal age sets as described in other communities (like in Nuer, see Evans-Pritchard 1965).\textsuperscript{119} Inter-generational activities apart from wang oo, including the Acoli work explored later, are usually amongst males or females respectively (e.g. females fetching water, walking to the gardens, males constructing houses, walking to the gardens etc.).

After supper at wang oo, the dishes were collected and brought to the central kitchen, and then people eventually retired to their houses to go to sleep, the last one extinguishing the fire.

### 3.5.2 Tic Acoli–Acoli work–as social repair

It bears repeating that according to the village survey, over 90\% of the households in Pabwoc East survived from subsistence farming alone in 2012. The remaining approximate 10\% have one or more individuals who have employment (teacher, police, soldier,

\textsuperscript{118} One can also understand wang oo as what has been described as a form of “gossip.” In these ways it speaks to Gluckman’s assertions about how gossip maintains the unity of social groups (1963), yet also acknowledges Paine’s insights about how individual’s use gossip to advance their own agendas (1967). These stances are not mutually exclusive, and emphasizing the performative aspects of gossip, like Brenneis (1984) and Besnier (1989), I believe wang oo to be an important indigenous mode of education, and of engagement in social, political, and moral community.

\textsuperscript{119} The Nuer live in South Sudan and are part of the Luo Nilotic language group like the Acoli. I often refer to Sharon Hutchinson’s contemporary work with Nuer (1996, 2000), as well as Evans-Pritchard’s work from the 1940s (1965) throughout this work.
carpenter) to add to the family’s farming activities.\textsuperscript{120} Cash crop growing is minimal, yet some residents do grow cotton, tobacco, or extra foodstuff to raise some additional funds.\textsuperscript{121} Aside from school age children then, over 90\% of the village population’s daily activities revolves around the procurement, not to mention the preparation, of foodstuff.

Figure 29- Okot in his tobacco field in the gardens. Pabwoc, 2012.

Okot, one of my host family’s sons who dropped out of school, was trying to raise some extra funds by growing tobacco.

\textsuperscript{120} Even these employments, however, mostly bring in very little money, and families are still completely dependent on subsistence farming for survival. For instance, my host family is counted in the 10\%–Baba teaches at the technical school in the center–and his monthly salary is about 75$ a month CDN.
\textsuperscript{121} Casual job prospects are quite narrow in rural Lamwo–brickmaking is the most available casual employment available.
As previously mentioned, people have claims to their land through their kin networks by virtue of customary land tenure. Officially through their father’s or husband’s kin,\textsuperscript{122} as the case may be, but access is often obtained through their mothers’ kin as well, as Santina (Auntie), and Docus’ (Auntie’s daughter) situations demonstrate. According to the Pabwoc genealogies, there were also two major families who traced themselves back to a daughter of Bwoc from way before the war years in the early 1900s and 1950s (in both cases, there was better treatment for the couple in Pabwoc than in the husband’s village). The maternal village as a safety net or place of refuge has also been documented (Hopwood 2015:403, Girling 1960:39-40, Finnström 2008:34) and attests to the fluidity in practice of patrilineal “traditions.”

In addition to the issue of land rights (access, usufruct) through kin relations, I am particularly interested in how the activities connected to the land itself serve to engage people with tekwaro, and in their social, political, and moral communities.

\textsuperscript{122} Women who marry into Pabwoc are also allotted gardening plots. They are used for a household’s subsistence, or for cash crops, as she sees fit.
I am interested in how these activities re-elaborate Acoli relatedness, and thus how they contribute to social repair. Turner and Turner (2008) emphasize that what they call “place-based knowledge” is manifest in food production, which is essential to physical survival but also to knowledge transmissions through the teachings and learnings of planting, harvesting, processing, serving, as well as in the economic and ceremonial uses of the foods. Picou and Gill (1996) have further examined how food may play a key role in fulfilling kin obligations and as payment for labour. Zoe Todd explores how fishing is not just about “the catch”, but entering into a series of relationships with the environment and other people to try to get fish (2014). Consequently, and as will be explored further in Chapter 4, denial of access to the land and environment, to subsistence and to food during displacement to the IDP camps, had damaging effects on intergenerational knowledge.
transmissions which has further debilitating effects on community (Nadasdy 2003, Turner 2014).

Figure 31- Ox-plough. Pabwoc, 2012.

Photo by Ryan Gauvin, reproduced here with his permission.

Conceptualizing Acoli work as social repair thus understands how subsistence work itself engages people in indigenous knowledge, in elaborating and re-elaborating relatedness, and thus in the creation and re-creation of social, political, and moral community.

As noted in my description of the typical day, women and men (although they usually separate according to gender—women and men, and even youth from the same family, have their own gardens) spend a large portion of their day either fetching firewood, preparing fields, planting, weeding, or harvesting. All of the farming in Pabwoc is done manually, except for the occasional use of a plough ox (borrowed through a kaka/sub-clan member–
there is one in all of Pabwoc East and West). Although historical documentation is lacking, today, both genders and all generations partake in farming, and occasional foraging (mushrooms, honey) activities. On weekends, children and youth help out in the gardens. On school vacations (twice a year), when youth return from boarding schools for a month or more, they also help in the gardens.

Depending on the activity and the size of their garden plot, the person works alone or forms work parties (awak) to get the work done more efficiently. Work parties can be informal arrangements with dog ot or dog gang members (or even with matrilineal relations who travel from their villages if a lot of help is needed—for a big harvest for example) where work is exchanged. For example Mama planted a very big millet garden the year I was there. In order to harvest everything in time, she had to call on other women of the Ocuga lineage within Pabwoc to help her. As other women also needed help with their plots, they would work collectively on the different women’s plots to make sure that everyone had the help needed to harvest efficiently. In these informal arrangements, reciprocal labour itself is the primary means of exchange, although the women involved may also keep some of the crop if appropriate to the circumstance. Work parties can also be more formal—with workers being “paid” in money and/or home made brew. In these days in Pabwoc, it was men who partook as paid labourers in the more “formal” work parties.
Given the customary land tenure system, and the high percentage of families who survive on subsistence farming alone, *awak* (paid and unpaid work parties) are a logical and efficient way to communally work towards individual families’, lineages’, and the sub-clan’s, subsistence. Not only do your kin ascribe to you rights to the land then, but your kin relations beyond your immediate family are also needed to efficiently survive from that land. Evans-Pritchard (1965:105) similarly describes the extended family among the Nuer, people who live in the same delineated settlement, as an economic unit because the single family could not always ensure an adequate supply of milk. Therefore, since milk is considered essential, the economic unit must be larger than the simple family group. Eschewing these classical classifications, yet describing a similar phenomena, Barbara Bodenhorn explores how in an Inuit community in Northern Alaska (where whale is hunted, which necessitates large hunting parties), “the obligations of relatedness are enacted through labour...they are clearly social and explicitly moral” (2000:145-6). In Acoliland, Oloya (2015:234) similarly describes *awak* as an essential aspect of *pito*, which is both the feeding, growing, and building of society. The collective responsibility for *pito lwak* (feeding and growing community) ideally encompassed the entire village (sub-clan). These works implicitly recognize how subsistence labour engages people in *tekwaro*, indigenous knowledge, and how that engagement elaborates (or re-elaborates in this case) relatedness. Understanding *tic Acoli*, Acoli work or labour as essential to relatedness provides insights into Acolis’ grave concerns with the social implications of the sheer poverty and reliance on food distribution within the camps (as explored in Chapter 4).
In addition to farming, animal rearing is another important part of subsistence living in contemporary Pabwoc village. Cows (non-dairy Ankole are the breed) are the most valuable animals, but goats, chicken, ducks, and the occasional pig also help the households survive and provide some extra funds when needed (for school fees, soap, oil, clothing etc.). Meat is rarely eaten, except on special occasions (parties, funerals, yupu abila). Animal rearing mostly concerns males, and there are communal grazing lands (olet) on the north side of the village for the cows. Although all livestock were wiped out during the war, Baba now owned two cows together with his brothers, and the youngest brother Lanek, moved his homestead closer to olet to take care of them.

Children are taught to farm and rear animals very young, and depending on their gender and age, are assigned tasks that contribute to the survival of the household. In addition to farming, females are responsible for fetching water, preparing foods by drying, sorting,
pounding, grinding, and cooking, washing dishes, clothes, smearing the houses, and the general cleanliness and appearance of the homestead. In addition to farming, males are mostly responsible for security, taking care of the animals, building the nightly fire, and building houses, food stores, and animal pens. Both males and females can tend to conflict resolution issues in the village and beyond, however Baba did confirm that males are more often engaged in these matters. This corroborated my observations of small gatherings of men I occasionally passed as I walked on the footpaths through the village.

I was shown and told many times during my fieldwork in 2012, and even during displacement in the camp (see Chapter 2 describing my experiences with Beatrice), how everyday activities connected to the land–subsistence farming, animal rearing, and food preparation and consumption–constitute an important aspect of tekwaro pa Acoli, Acoli indigenous knowledge, or “what makes you Acoli”, relatedness. The quotidian activities connected with the land, identified as tic Acoli (Acoli work), contribute to ideas of what a “good” person and a contributing member of society is–philosophical ideas of personhood and community involved with pito lwak (growing/feeding/building community). The Acoli term odoko dano, “a real human being”, although not used colloquially in Pabwoc village, is useful to philosophically think through Acoli work practices and their effects. An important aspect of odoko dano is one who is hardworking, knows their duties (Apoko 1967:49), and

123 For further emphasis on the historical value of work to Acoli notions of personhood and relatedness, Girling had documented in the 1950s how gender related work tools were used during birth ceremonies (1960:23-24).
contributes to household maintenance (Finnström 2008:25). As Sister Olga told me one day:

Here in Acoli, everyone has a job—even the disabled stay home to sort beans and protect the baby chicks from large birds while people go to the fields. Even very young children use their batida (slingshot) to keep the birds away from the crops. Everyone does what they can. (Personal exchange 2012)

In the village survey of 48 homesteads, over 70% spoke about subsistence work practices as important aspects of tekwaro pa Acoli. One elderly woman said: “Acoli tekwaro is the things that we Acoli people do, it is kit me kwo (our ways of life).” Her daughter-in-law added, “Acoli tekwaro is seen in the ways we live and the ways we do our things, planting, weeding, cooking, eating.” Holly Porter’s collaborators similarly recounted that in order to understand their lives, the Acoli she worked with emphasized that people must know “the way we live” (2013:18).124

While it makes sense that hard communal labour is necessary for the survival of people subsistence farming in rural villages, it is important to acknowledge how these Acoli works, and the communality of much of that work, also contribute to Acoli social philosophy, notions of personhood, and social relations and organization—of relatedness—all things commonly expressed through the idiom of tekwaro pa Acoli. Understanding engagement in

124 Porter’s respondents answered that in order for people to understand their lives they must know: 1) how we live, 2) what we eat, 3) how we marry, 4) the story of Labongo and Gipir (as stated earlier, this story is not as “popular” in Pabwoc and Padibe, it is only widely known because it is taught in the primary schools).
tekwaro as elaborating relatedness highlights how these Acoli works constitute social repairing in rural Acoli.

Many in Pabwoc also emphasized the communal aspects of the work. As one male adult said: “Acoli culture is how to live with others and do Acoli work together, because if you don’t work, you become a thief.” Another, a woman, emphasized: “since before 1986, tekwaro was in good order—there was wang oo, we ate together, we dug together.” These comments, as well as scholarship linking subsistence activities to indigenous knowledge and indigenous legal orders, attest to how working, eating, and living together, how relatedness, grounded, symbolized or anchored in the land, were profoundly affected by the years of war and displacement.

Figure 33- Bringing firewood home in the dry season. Pabwoc, 2012.
The transmission of historical knowledge between people as one moves through the land to perform the work, including land boundaries, ancestral details, historical conflicts etc., in addition to the actual knowledge required to perform the work efficiently (vegetation identification, farming, practices etc.), belies Keith Basso’s astute observation that place-making is a cultural activity. This activity serves as “world-building”, whereas what is remembered about a particular place delimits how it, and the social relations enacted in it, will be imagined in the present and future (1996:5).

With that in mind, it is perhaps clearer how displacement from the land and the ordering of Acoli work and ways of life, and how reliance on food aid for example, affected tekwaro pa Acoli, as social philosophy, relatedness, and practice. It also posits a strong link between work, indigenous knowledge, and relatedness that explains how youth who grew up in the camps were said to be missing, or “out of”, tekwaro. I thus understand Acoli work (tic Acoli) as practices that make place and thus relatedness as per Basso, and that engage people in tekwaro, in participating in their social, political, and moral community. I understand these practices of labour, of Acoli work, to be social repairing in these post-conflict and post-displacement contexts because of the ways that they re-create and re-elaborate relatedness. Social repair occurs as people participate in subsistence activities, provoked by a return to the land, that engage the different generations in tekwaro.
3.6 Conclusion

As explored in the introduction, Okot p’Bitek emphasized that Acoli culture, or the philosophy of his people, was not only what one said, the stories that were told or the songs sung, but that it was found in “everyday life in what people actually did" (1973:90). The land here, or specifically the village lands, acts as a material symbol (Kenyatta 1938) or idiom (Carsten 1997) of relatedness, and Acoli work itself associated with that anchor provides a framework for inter-generational cooperation and interaction through which learning tekwaro occurs. A return home to ancestral land necessitated tic Acoli, and it is these practices that work to create and re-create, and thus also repair, social relations. Acoli work fulfills notions of pito lwak, the interdependent growing of community, as well as ideals of Acoli personhood concerned with being useful and hardworking (Apoko 1967, Finnström 2008, Porter 2013). Acoli work also necessitates, as well as organizes and reinforces, gendered and generational cooperation and obligation that work toward mutual survival. The work itself thus acts a boundary process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016) that gathers people together and activates inter-generational interactions, essential for learning, without necessitating complete consensus or perfectly shared meanings.

I have learned that the everyday work activities connected to survival from the land through subsistence farming are vital for remaking community and restoring relations after war and, especially, after displacement. Being a contributing member of your immediate and extended family (lineage, sub-clan) by upholding Acoli normative ideals
connected to working hard and Acoli work (tic Acoli) ideally serves to re-establish social relations and engender participation and engagement with the kaka, one’s social, political, and moral community. A return to the land and village life also literally remakes social relations by making visible and calling upon historical kin-based relatedness, and kin-based communal governance organizations, that organize everyday life.

First attending to the narrated history of Kaka Pabwoc sub-clan and village, the chapter showed how genealogy is the root (though not the constraint) of relatedness that continues to govern many aspects of everyday life in Pabwoc village and the Padibe sub-counties today through various kin-based communal governance organizations (chiefdom, sub-clan, lineage). I then recounted the recent displacement of Pabwoc residents from the LRA-Government war, localizing the effects of the war on one village, and one family in particular. Exploring the village of Pabwoc, I examined everyday activities and practices there in 2012. Finally, I discussed how residents’ return to their ancestral land (ngom kwaro) after years of war and displacement, and the social organization and work necessary to live there again, itself worked to remake or strengthen relatedness between sons and daughter of Bwoc, to learn Acoli indigenous knowledge and tekwaro, and thus to make home living again, to perform social repair, grounded in their ancestral land.

Describing work practices of learning tekwaro as processes of social repairing concern not a return or obedience to some imagined static tradition, but re-engagement with indigenous knowledge, and participation in imagining Acoli social philosophy and
indigenous notions of relatedness in the present. This exploration of “being sons and daughters of Bwoc” establishes how the land is in fact, as Kenyatta suggests, the material symbol that holds family and tribe together, and asserts one major way in which Acoli relatedness is being re-created, re-activated, and repaired through Acoli work practices on the land.
Chapter 4: *Woro* (Respect): “You Say It Is a Violation of Your Rights”

4.1 Introduction–Respect

*Woro* is a term you learn quickly in rural Acoliland. Especially if you are a student anthropologist, interested in *tekwaro pa Acoli* and the language, who has recently come to live amongst an extended family with extremely pushy but loving aunts. I realized that I had begun to truly absorb these lessons when I returned home from the center one afternoon in the dry season to find uncle snoring, with no one else around, under a tree. He was visiting from the center, where he now lived. Uncle Pacoto was my host father’s mother’s brother (Augustine’s paternal grandmother’s brother). He was the oldest of her brothers, and therefore occupied the highest role of Uncle. The role of Uncle in Acoliland is especially revered, and as recounted to me by my host family’s sons, Uncle has the power to both curse and bless.\(^\text{126}\) I rushed across the homestead to fetch him some water and cut up a papaya I had in my house. I gently woke him up, exchanged multiple greetings, then kneeling, I poured water over his hands for him to wash. He prayed (a protestant prayer in the Acoli language), and I then handed over the cup and plate. I left him then to bathe from the road, and returned to my house where I first started to gnaw the remaining fruit off the papaya skins. As I was gnawing the rinds, I realized that if I had seen me (or someone else) gnawing before, I would never have understood. But there I

\(^{125}\) Deceased.

\(^{126}\) The idea that the wife’s brother occupies such a revered role ideally ensures protection of the woman and her children in her husband’s village. As such, they usually play a significant role in *cuna* processes, including the negotiations for brideweight and *luk* (to be explained later in this chapter). Girling (1960:39) speaks about the special relationship between an uncle and his nephew as the closest one after a father and son. p’Bitek also writes about the social importance of the uncle (1974:148-149). The uncle term and relation is also informally given to all males from one’s maternal sub-clan.
was, gnawing away and genuinely happy that I had been able to serve Uncle in this way. Aha–this was true *woro*, I thought.

Drawing on four *kabake* (village debates) and the village-wide survey involving 48 homesteads in Pabwoc East village, this chapter explores the notion of *woro* (respect) and residents of the Padibe sub-counties’ beliefs about the effects of war and displacement upon this important aspect of relatedness. I consider here adults and elders’ preoccupation with the decline of *woro* (respect) and what that could mean to the organization of social relations, including in relation to the kin-based communal governance organizations responsible for delineating everyday rights and responsibilities, like land claims and moral accountability, in rural areas. In Chapter 3, I explored how *ngom kwaro* (ancestral land) is the idiom of relatedness in rural Acoli, and highlighted how the Acoli work necessary for survival on the land provided a framework that re-gathered people together. This re-gathering allowed a re-elaboration of relatedness, and thus participation in one’s social, political, and moral community because of how survival from the land engenders inter-generational interactions that engage people in *tekwaro*. I understand this engagement with *tekwaro*, this re-elaboration of relatedness, to constitute social repairing in contemporary rural Padibe sub-counties. Here, I explore the prevalent correlated belief of the decline of *woro* with the erosion of *cuna* (“traditional” courtship processes) within the spatial, logistical, and ideological conditions of IDP camp life to finally highlight how contemporary engagement in the *cuna* process also serves as a boundary process (objects;
Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016) to re-elaborate relatedness, and thus also serves as an important site of social repairing.

To do so, I attend to cuna as a historical process of inter-generational, inter-gendered, and inter-kaka interactions that activate the engagement of a couple’s extended kin in the co-creation of a sanctioned union and family, beginning from a couple’s first serious considerations of each other through to the exchanges of bridewealth. Cuna itself, though translated as courtship, refers to processes that are considered part of the larger marriage continuum, whereby “marriage” itself concerns a community’s sanctioning of a union (Ogbu 1978). Describing specific examples of cuna interactions in contemporary rural Padibe, I examine how inter-generational participation and negotiation works to activate networks of social relationships and engagements with tekwaro that are important to re-elaborating relatedness, and thus to social repair. Additionally, engagement in, though not necessarily fulfillment of, extended kin demands serves as an important site for the negotiation of gendered and generational rights and obligations (Rice 2014), which will be further examined in Chapter 5. Acknowledging woro as a prerequisite for inter-generational learning through engagement with tekwaro, and cuna as a second important boundary process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016) that like Acoli work, is rooted in the land, this chapter contributes to the dissertation’s main assertion that the multi-generational everyday negotiations and engagements with various aspects of tekwaro in response to contemporary contexts work to re-elaborate relatedness and thus serves as important, everyday, and indigenous practices of social repairing.
4.2 “Woro pe!”—“There Is No Respect!”

Aaahhhhh....the youth today are growing up just anyhow- without direction. They drink a lot, fight a lot, they can even kill their fellows. I can’t tell if the young ones will be alright—it depends on their parents...in those times, no one really cared to sit down and tell them what they should be doing. Museveni’s Gov’t emphasized “human rights”¹²⁷—which made it worse—the youth used it to do whatever they wanted without any respect....for me, I want the children to be disciplined- to have woro. They used to be. Woro pe!- they have no respect for elders, and even for their mother and father. (Female, 70 yrs. old)

To begin to talk about the effects of the war, specifically the effects of the war on tekwaro, many people, like the woman above, spoke of woro—respect. While woro generally means respect for others, it also particularly references ideas about Acoli personhood—especially ideal gendered inter-generational relations and comportment, and a resulting respect for, and engagement with, kin-based communal governance organizations.

As explored in the introduction, respect and obedience are common markers of an “ideal African childhood identity” (Cheney 2007:199). Both early and contemporary writings support the primacy of respect in inter-generational relations to Acoli ideas of personhood. Anna Apoko (1967), the first Acoli woman to attend University in Uganda, wrote about children’s education

¹²⁷ This woman is referring to the child rights’ clubs that were created in many schools in the IDP camps, and will be further explained in section 4.5. Many youth reportedly used the excuse of “rights” to defend illicit behaviour (gambling, multiple sex partners etc.).
and attaining personhood in rural Acoli, emphasizing respect for elders: “Great attention is paid to all aspects of children’s “moral” development. They must learn to obey those who are older than they are...” Finnström (2008:25) describes the Acoli concept of odoko dano (a real human being) as someone who is, partly “...able to take advice from elders and contribute to household maintenance.” J.P. Ocitti describes how an Acoli indigenous education was primarily concerned with behaviour that upholds reciprocal kin ties, and as such children were taught to respect elders, and to thus appreciate their social obligations and responsibilities above their individual interests (1973). In addition, Harlacher suggests that deep respect for elders was tied to reverence for the ancestors, and that beliefs about the ancestors’ power over the living make elders vital mediators between the living children of the clan and the dead (2009:35, 169).

While inter-generational respect implies a range of conceptual and moral attitudes tied to politeness, discipline, usefulness, and reverence—desired aspects of personhood—in rural Acoliland it simultaneously serves to supports the authority of kin-based communal governance organizations, an authority which is rooted in the land and customary land tenure systems.128

These kin-based communal governance organizations are responsible for ordering many of the rights and responsibilities of residents, principally land rights and obligations concerning conflict resolution, and as explored in the introduction, they constitute a social, political and moral community (Oloya 2015). The kin-based communal governance in rural Acoli follows mostly patrilineal, where rights and obligations are inherently by males, and mostly patrilocal, where

128 Atkinson (2010) and Bere (1947) both term the indigenous village-based governing authorities of Acoli social organization as “lineage-based authority.”
wives reside in their husband’s villages, regulations of social relations.129

Indigenous Acoli kin-based communal governance has undoubtedly transformed through time, as Oloya (2015) describes, the facultative mutualism (brotherhood) of Acoli political ideation led to the co-existence of kin-based communal governance with different political institutions variously imposed at regional and national levels historically (including Arab traders, the Colonial Government, and National Governments). Although the degree of power and authority that remains vested in kin-based communal governance organizations varies from village to village, as mentioned in Chapter 3, my experiences in Pabwoc and Padibe found them to be enduring primary sites for the organization of the rights and responsibilities of everyday life. This corroborates Porter’s assertion that contemporary authority in Acoliland remains vested in the “kinship systems”, that despite historical and political transformations (including Colonialism, National government policies, and the recent war and camp experiences), still establish moral and legal social order over National Government, NGOs, and churches (2013:40, 132). Martiniello explores the widespread persistence and reinstatement of kin-based communal governance since return from the IDP camps, and looks to Acoli’s long history of “interpenetration and relative autonomy vis-à-vis market and state forces” (2015:656) as reasons for its enduring strength.

The acknowledgement of the contemporary importance of kin-based communal governance in people’s everyday lives, especially in rural areas due to customary tenure, points to why woro in

129 This “mostly” is explored throughout the dissertation, especially in consideration of women’s substantial land rights in their own natal villages, as well as in their mother’s villages. It is also analyzed in Chapter 5 while discussing the newly formulated constitution of one such kin-based communal governance organization.
inter-generational relations is essential to both Acoli ideas of personhood and social organization (the kin-based social, political and moral community). The myriad effects of a loss of *woro* during camp life include decreased engagement with the authority of one’s parents—which exacerbated what is common for youth of a certain age, i.e. teenagers that assert their own independence—but it also engendered decreased acknowledgement of the authority of kin-based communal governance organizations, thus decreasing participation in one’s own social, political, and moral community. This is not to be understood as only a lack of obedience to a mostly gerontocratic, patriarchal organization whereby most authority lies (or lied, which will be further explored in Chapter 5) with male elders, it is rather about a lack of respect to engage in, and participate in (with conflict, negotiation etc.), one’s indigenous social, political, and moral community.

One specific area in which people of all ages in the Padibe sub-counties consistently identify transformations from a lack of *woro* during the war was in the erosion of *cuna*—traditional courtship (encompassing “marriage”). Without *woro*, it is said, youth did not engage in *cuna* practices regarding the creation of unions and family, which as I will show, caused(s) significant complications to everyday social organization and notions of personhood. While these complications have also been generative of responsive changes within the kin-based communal governance organizations, which will be further explored in Chapter 5, I look here to how the inter-generational participation necessary in the *cuna* process itself activates a range of social relationships and engagements with indigenous knowledge that re-elaborate relatedness and participation in one’s social, political, and moral community. The contemporary engagement with, and participation in, the *cuna* processes is thus recognized as a second significant boundary
process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016), and site of social repairing.

### 4.3 Cuna—Traditional Courtship

In two consultative meetings held by the youth group’s staff with Rwodi\textsuperscript{130} and their councils, cuna was the first and most important tekwaro-grounded practice affected by the war and displacement years, as discussed by the adults and elders in attendance.\textsuperscript{131} The youth group began their activities with these group discussions about tekwaro. The first one was with elders from Kaka Potini,\textsuperscript{132} and the next with Rwot Odoki of Kaka Padibe and his executive council (both in March 2012). At both these meetings, the youth group staff asked a variety of questions regarding the effects of the war and camp life on tekwaro. Results from the village-wide survey offered some of the same results when I engaged Pabwoc East residents in conversation regarding if and how tekwaro had been affected by the recent war. Over 35 of the 48 extended household surveyed mentioned the war’s effects on cuna.

A few weeks after the consultations with the Rwodi and elders, the youth group began kabake (villages debates\textsuperscript{133}) in four villages where they were working with previously existing “cultural groups.” The premise of a kabake is simple—it was usually a recorded

\textsuperscript{130} Rwodi is plural of Rwot, Acoli for “chief” or head of what has been called chiefdoms.

\textsuperscript{131} There is a full explanation of my involvement with the youth group in Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{132} As described in Chapter 3, Potini has been lobbying to be re-instated as Rwot (chief) of Padibe. As corroborated in Atkinson (2010), the Rwotship of Padibe switched from Potini clan to Pamot clan at some point in time. Although Potini’s claims were ultimately not acknowledged by Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi, the youth group still met with them to respectfully engage.

\textsuperscript{133} Kabake literally means meeting point in Acoli.
debate on location to be broadcast on the radio. In this case however, the debate would not be recorded for radio, but would be used to engage the different cultural groups’ villages in the youth group’s programming. For myself, it was a rare opportunity to listen to public debate about the effects of war on tekwaro. The youth group’s staff asked if my Acoli language teacher, Ojera—a noted radio personality—would moderate one of the debates. He accepted and was moderator for the kabake at Katum. Youth group staff moderated the other three kabake that took place in Alanyo, Oriya, and Pabwoc villages. Participation was voluntary and participants were not paid. For two of the kabake, the village’s cultural group performed a series of dances beforehand. The youth group’s staff used the same question in all four debates: “Did the war make Acoli tekwaro to get lost?”

During the village debates, cuna was also repeatedly referenced as an aspect of Acoli tekwaro that had gotten “lost” from the war, specifically from the camps. It also was one of the main topics that, not surprisingly, provoked the most heated and passionate debate:

“Look at cuna- in the past, if a boy wants a lady, he is supposed to go to the girl’s family. Today they just take her from the road side…the camp brought that!” And, as one middle-aged woman stated: “During the war, people were all mixed up in the camp. A boy from a different kaka close to a girl from a different kaka, will just go together…courtship was too easy in the camp…they did not follow criteria…” Elaborating on how cuna used to be done before the war, the LC1 at one kabake stated:

134 Kabake is a weekly radio show by Mega FM started in 2003.
In the past, a boy goes to a girl’s family, and finds the mother. That mother will give time for the girl and boy for discussion. After the boy has left, the mother asks the girl about the boy’s history, family, and so on, and then the elders inquire further in the community. If all is found to be good, then the elders from both sides meet to discuss these things.

In further agreement, an older woman added:

The war spoiled the Acoli—spoiled tekwaro. In the past, woro (respect) was highest. Today, woro pe (there is no respect). War made us go to the camp, and tekwaro eroded there.

Courtship, and other things…nowadays, girls get pregnant so fast! But before, imagine, boys were supposed to go to the girls’ parents’ house and remove their shoes in front!

An older man got up and addressed the crowd to add to the increasingly vibrant debate “Woman and kids are gotten for free—without payment! There was no respect in the camp.” At this point, a young man in his early 20s, who was smartly dressed in purple pinstripes and well-shined shoes, interrupted, shouting “But that is a good thing, before it was very hard to get a woman, we had to wait until we were almost 30, but now, even us very young, we all have women from the camp!”

An older woman got up here and calmly interjected:

Yes, it is from the camps…but it is not positive. In the past, growing up, at around 8 (UCT 2 p.m.), there were bicycles in front of my door, boys came to try to convince me...if there was one that I liked, I would pick up a skin and give it to him to sit on. After the boy had left,

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135 Acoli reckon time starting with hour 1 (cawa acel) at 7 a.m.. The hours don’t correspond to Coordinated Universal Time (UCT), they more appropriately and practically correspond to activities throughout the day. Hour 8 technically corresponds to 2 p.m., but actually indicates the time after people have returned from garden work, and have taken a small lunch.
my mother would ask about the boy...nowadays, you people are free like goats. Girls and boys don’t follow cuna today—you say that it is a violation of your rights;\textsuperscript{136} but it is not a violation—you are supposed to listen to your mother and father...

A young girl then rose and spoke softly: “It is true, now girls are stopped by boys on the way (road), they do not ever think to ever go to her parents’ home.” There was a moment of silence as the girl sat down. A 45 year-old woman also added, “In the past, relatives knew each other. Nowadays, relatives are not known...but they are not supposed to marry each other...this is a very serious problem!” An elderly woman finally added: “The war has affected all this. Nowadays, camp life has spoiled our children completely. That’s why most are just shouting anyhow here—they do not know what the elders are talking about...children should respect their parents—but they do not learn their tekwaro. There is no respect for elders. During camp, a boy can go anyhow to a girl...this has also led to our tekwaro getting lost...we must go back to our tekwaro...”

These debate excerpts demonstrate, along with the results of the village survey and Rwodi meetings, people’s perceptions of the deleterious effects of camp life on tekwaro, specifically on the important concept of woro, and its effects on cuna. It is not surprising that people were concerned with changes to the processes involved in the creation of unions—or in the reproduction of the domestic group (Fortes 1958) and the productive unit (Meillassoux 1979), as it can serve as a primary site of negotiation about gender, rights, and generational authority (Rice 2014). I

\textsuperscript{136} As previously referenced, the woman is referring to the teaching of child rights by NGOs to youth in the camp. Some youth reportedly used the excuse of “child rights” to justify various forms of disobedience; from drinking, to having casual sex. One youth even explained to me: “You know, rights are against Acoli culture. Acoli culture is primitive.”
believe however, that the pervasive concern over woro and cuna was not simply about obedience to a prescribed order, but belied generalized anxiety about not having the respect necessary to engage and participate in one’s social, political, and moral community.

Although there are no strictly defined aspects that must be adhered to, generally, cuna is a process encompassing many relations, elements, and steps. As described in two village-wide wang oo in Padibe East sub-counties, cuna involved the free will of both the suitor and the girl. After will and want were established by both parties, the parents and extended kin networks of both parties (bilateral) were consulted.137 If approved, and important elements like incest were ruled out, as well as familial laziness, the youth were allowed to be together while extended kin negotiations proceeded (p’Bitek 1964). These negotiations could, and usually did, take several years. If children were born before the agreed upon bridewealth (lim akumu) was paid by the groom’s family to the bride’s, as was common, luk (a kind of fine, as per p’Bitek 1971:25) was paid, also negotiated between the man and woman’s families, in addition to the eventual bridewealth to legitimize the children within the patrilineal line.138 Even if the man did not end up marrying the woman (for whatever reason), a type of luk could be paid by the man’s family, to the woman’s, to legitimize the child or children in his patrilineal line. Today, balo kwan (literally, “spoiling study”) is also demanded by the woman’s family in Padibe sub-counties when a young man and woman’s unsanctioned union results in children and interrupts her schooling, whether they proceed to get

137 p’Bitek particularly takes up the issues of “want” (mit) in his description of Acoli love (1964).
138 For a complete description of various forms of luk found in Gulu district today, please see Porter (2013:192-194).
married or not. *Balo kwan* is an additional fine paid for disruption of a woman’s education.\(^{139}\)

Historically, Acoli couples were unofficially sanctioned to have sex before marriage (Girling 1960, p’Bitek 1964, Porter 2013)—if we understand marriage as the final major bridewealth exchange. Girling even noted that over 50% of marriages (sexual unions) began in elopement, meaning, before official negotiations for bridewealth had begun (1960:74). If couples have in the past had sexual unions before “marriage”, before they were officially sanctioned to by their families and the community at large (Ogbu 1978), why was there such pronounced and prevalent concern with the same actions occurring during the war and camp years? Why was *cuna* repeatedly referred to as an important aspect of *tekwaro* that was transformed by the war?

Rather than understanding components of *cuna* such as bridewealth and *luk* as a material exchange that itself legitimates unions and offspring, it is rather the inter-generational participation itself, and the notions of relatedness—of how people reckon they are related and what being related does— that are elaborated by the processes of negotiation and exchange, that are key. Attending to *cuna* as a social process (in which *luk* and bridewealth function) that elaborates relatedness also accounts for how past transformations to bridewealth payments in Acoli, from hoes, to cows, to money, to a combination thereof, did not significantly affect the *cuna* process as a whole.\(^{140}\) Parents and elders were still eventually consulted and involved in the

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\(^{139}\) Even when negotiating bridewealth, the bride-to-be’s education is quite indicative of the amount of wealth requested.

\(^{140}\) Part of this is due to Acoli communities’ continuous agricultural dependence and the value of land over, for example, cattle as explored by Hutchinson (1996) in the Nuer communities where she
legitimation process, despite the kinds or amounts of wealth transferred. It is thus the perpetual lack of involvement of parents and elders, and the resulting inter-generational disengagement, in the sanctioning of sexual unions and relationships during the war and camp years—and not simply the lack of a material/financial exchange—that have led to the perceptions of the transformations of cuna, and its correlation with a loss of woro explored above.

The fact that cuna (linked to woro) was repeatedly singled out as the top tekwaro-grounded practice affected by the war and displacement in Rwodi meetings, debates, fireside chats, and in the village survey is important. The predominance of this belief points to the paramount role of—if not immediate—eventual parental and elder participation in the sanctioning of unions, despite the exact order of steps undertaken. And as I will show in section 4.6, this participation creates multi-generational engagements with tekwaro. It also belies the idea that many who came of age during the camp years, away from home and ngom kwaro, became generally disengaged from their own indigenous social, political, and moral communities. The decade or so within the IDP camps was an all-encompassing experience that drastically altered generational relations and interactions, affecting engagement with tekwaro, and thus fundamental notions of relatedness. Cuna can thus be understood as an important series of practices that elaborate local notions of relatedness that simultaneously acts as a boundary process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016) that serves to create common ground and cooperation without necessary consensus—it is interaction and participation itself that are key—and thus functions as a significant worked. She showed how a shift in bridewealth from cattle, to money, to guns, in what was a pastoral community impacted local social organization.

141 There are also many accounts of how the camps altered gender relations (see Branch 2011, Dolan 2009).
site of social repairing.

I will next consider how cuna is generally associated with relatedness, personhood, and kin-based communal governance organizations in rural Acoliland today. Then, I describe some of the camp conditions that were detrimental to woro, hindering inter-generational practices and relations, which in turn eroded cuna practices. Finally narrating some examples of men and women’s engagements with the cuna process in contemporary Padibe sub-counties, I show how the activation of extended kin networks, the learning of multiple aspects of indigenous knowledge through those interactions, and the resulting participation in the moral, political, and economic community where one resides, all elaborate aspects of relatedness, positing cuna itself as a dynamic site of encounter, interaction, negotiation, and of social repair in post-conflict contexts.

4.4 Cuna, Obligations, and Privileges

Inter-generational relations and respect for parents and elders in rural Acoli imply participation in the creation of one’s social, political, and moral community. The belief in the erosion of woro, with a specific impact being the “loss” of cuna from the war and displacement camps, therefore represents substantial challenges to notions of relatedness, rooted in the land, which caused, and causes, further social uncertainty in contemporary contexts of rural communities rebuilding their lives. Kin-based communal governance organizations, which now incorporate many of the youth who grew up in the camps (as they have aged), are in the midst of responding to some of these challenges, as will be seen in Chapter 5, trying to assure rights to individuals whose status may be precarious from an erosion of cuna by more formally adopting non-patriarchal and non-
gerontocratic governance elements within their structures. However, the social uncertainty that has ensued from an erosion of cuna, from an erosion of inter-generational interaction and participation in unions, has still, in the present, created a fair amount of social disorganization, particularly in regards to land. Understanding the erosion of cuna’s impacts on land access and rights, and considering that land is the idiom of relatedness in rural Acoli, explains to a large degree people’s preoccupations with cuna’s decline in the post-war period. This concern thus also belies the years of war and displacement’s effects on relatedness itself.

Changes in cuna, and changes in the inter-generational interactions involved in cuna, have deeply affected access to land and knowledge about land rights in rural Acoliland. Customary land tenure is the norm in rural Acoliland, and throughout Uganda as a whole, with 90% of all rural land in Uganda under customary tenure (Atkinson and Hopwood 2013:i). As one of the four land tenure systems recognized in Uganda, The Land Act 1998 states that customary land tenure shall be governed by rules generally accepted as binding by the particular community. In rural Acoliland, this vests rights to land, or decisions about land claims (Hopwood 2015) in the collective of the pertinent, kin-based communal governance organizations. Land rights are mostly inherited by males through their fathers’ lines, and acquired by women through their husbands. But, as explored in Chapter 3, population growth over the two decades of war and displacement, “lost”

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142 Hopwood (2015) discusses the high variance in village composition in Acoliland today. Some villages comprise descendants of a single sub-clan or clan, yet some have mixes of several, including guests. In Pabwoc East, where I lived, all residents could trace themselves, (through descent or marriage), to an apical ancestor, through the father’s, and in many cases, the mother’s line as well. 143 Of course, exceptions occur all the time when a family or part of a family remains in the mother’s village. Also, women often retain rights to farm in their paternal villages, especially if a convenient walking distance to travel.
knowledge about customary land borders, changed physical landmarks, as well as exposure to ideas about private property, have all added to a proliferation of land disputes in contemporary post-conflict contexts. Adding “unclear” rights to access land because of persistently “illegitimate” unions (no eventual inter-generational negotiations or involvement, no brideweight or luk ever having been exchanged) from a “lost” cuna practice further complicates already complex practices regarding land rights in these post-conflict and post-displacement contexts. As Hopwood (2015) describes, “massive” marital instability has created much confusion in the context of customary land claims.

During the war and camp years, many youth entered (and still enter) into multiple, temporary unions, which lacked (lack) the eventual negotiations, financial commitments, and consent of extended kin involvement that is ideally assured by cuna (Mergelsberg 2012). These perpetually unsanctioned unions resulted (and still result) in many “illegitimate” children, without formal claim to land rights through their father’s line. It also jeopardized (and still jeopardizes) rural women’s rights (the degree depending on whether the woman was/is actually living with the man), because of the absence of relations between her and her husband’s kin, and the couple’s disengagement in their larger social, political, and moral communities. Although the establishment of these relations through cuna processes provides a relative security to women, it is one that has recently been acknowledged as assuring the best protection to women’s land rights, over free-market rights, for example (Atkinson and Hopwood 2013, Nayaki 2011). On the other hand, the

144 Atkinson and Hopwood (2013) have written an in-depth report on the proliferation of land disputes, as well as on their resolutions, in contemporary Acoliland.
145 And as I argued with Baines (2014), for urban Acoli women as well.
sheer number of perpetually unsanctioned marriages and illegitimate children resulting from the war years has also worked to stretch and formalize other indigenous mechanisms, namely the matrilineal village as a historical site of refuge. Adapting to the needs of the burgeoning population of their daughters, and their daughter’s children, who have not been able to engage in the *cuna* process, one particular kin-based communal governance organization (Pabwoc’s), for example, has more formally acknowledged the “exception to the rule”, (matrilineality as opposed to patrilineaty), in their newly written constitution (more in Chapter 5).\textsuperscript{146}

In addition to the importance of *cuna* to land rights, the *cuna* practice is also vital to conceptions of personhood, and for full participation in one’s indigenous social, political, and moral community. It therefore functions as a kind of process of initiation into one’s social, political, and moral community. As Girling states for women in the 1950s: “It is as a mother that a woman achieves her highest social status” (1960:68), and men also are judged in their role as husband and father in consideration for their level of participation within the kin-based communal governance organizations.\textsuperscript{147} As Auntie Santina plainly put it, “a woman is judged by how she runs her household, but a man is also judged by how he keeps his own household.” This point also came up when an Acoli Catholic Sister asked me one day if Jewish priests (ie. Rabbis) were allowed to marry. After I answered that they were, and in fact they were more revered and respected if they were married with kids–because they could rely on their own experiences when advising the

\textsuperscript{146} As explored by Nolwazi Mkhwanazi (2014) in South Africa, an increase in “illegitimate” offspring often provokes more matrifocal households.\textsuperscript{147} Even though the war and displacement affected gender roles and relationships within the IDP camps (Dolan 2009), and afterwards (Branch 2011), the role, and value of the role of parent, inasmuch as I can talk about rural contexts in the Padibe sub-counties, has not changed.
community—she was pensive, and answered that it worked the same in Acoli with indigenous political governance.

In addition to effects on mothers’ and fathers’ personhood, cuna also substantially affects personhood for children in Acoli. In their study of children living in Gulu town who were born into the LRA for example, Stewart and Anyeko show how identification with a patrilineal line, “knowing one’s home (paternal village), is an integral component of social belonging in Acholi culture” (JP 2015:19). Some of the children do not know their fathers’ sub-clans, while some have been able to trace them and have attempted contact. They show how children seek information and relations with their father’s sub-clan to fill a “painful void in their sense of identity” (20), as well as to secure access to land. In a study on “identity” in post-war Acoliland, Davenport also found that the majority of participants strongly identified with their father’s sub-clans, many remarking that “the clan is heavily involved in supporting its clansmen, as well as resolving problems or disputes that arise in the lives of their clansmen” (2011:26). Although these strong identifications with one’s father’s sub-clan was and still is predominant, the possibly large number of perpetually “unclaimed” children (children living with their mothers in her own natal village, or in towns) might eventually shift these norms.

Functionally speaking, the authority and organizing capacities of kin-based communal governance organizations lies in large part with their communal stewardship of land. During the war years, dependence on the land was severed due to displacement, and thus kin-based communal governance authority waned. Additionally, much parental or extended lineage authority depended
on the necessity of large sums of wealth, mostly livestock or money based on the value of livestock, for *cuna*. During the war years, livestock was raided by both the LRA and UPDF. Add stats?

Lack of respect (*woro*) for adults and elders from war and camp time, in part because of a disconnection from the land and the widespread loss of all livestock (wealth), eroded *cuna* processes that have led to, for many, uncertainty in regard to ideals of personhood and relatedness in contemporary rural Padibe sub-counties. Despite changes that are occurring within the kin-based communal governance organizations and possibly in people’s personal identifications in contemporary contexts, it is still the rule that unions and children are more easily and readily sanctioned through inter-generational participation in *cuna* because the participation itself creates engagement with, and in, a social, political, and moral community. Before attending to contemporary examples of engagement in *cuna*, I further explore below people’s beliefs about the spatial, logistical, and ideological dimensions of camp life that diminished *woro* and eroded *cuna*.

### 4.5 *Woro, Cuna, and the IDP camps*

People’s repeated correlation between a loss of *woro* and *cuna* implies a fundamental lack of respect for parental and elder authority within the camp setting. But what were the spatial, 

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148 Dolan (2009) has an interesting discussion of blame, connecting discussions such as these about internalized blame (lack of respect as eg.) for social breakdown to the possibilities of regaining control. Blaming youth’s lack of respect provides more control to people to rectify these issues than to blame the Government itself for the camps in the first place, or the LRA for its role in the war and displacement.
logistical, and ideological dimensions of camp life that specifically engendered this lack of respect? Chris Dolan’s analysis of the implementation of the IDP camps as a form of social torture by Museveni’s national government, as an instrument of “subordinate inclusion” of the population in Northern Uganda, shows how kin-based authority (the kin based communal governance organizations) was purposefully undermined with forced displacement to the camps (2009). In addition to this spatial element, squalid, overcrowded, and confined conditions, the logistics of camp life itself contributed to an erosion of woro. Forced reliance on INGOs for subsistence, and exposure to their sensitizations and trainings, as well as a large infiltration of born-again churches, also ideological challenged the authority of people’s indigenous knowledge, beliefs, and practices, and thus also parental, elder, and/or indigenous kin-based communal governance authority.

As previously recounted, Padibe IDP camp was established in early 1997 after massive displacement from increased LRA attacks in the area. Sanctioned by the National Government, the space of the IDP camp was organized by the camp commander and sub-county village representatives by allotting land per village and Parish, where residents could build their huts in refuge (interview with camp commander in 2012). As more and more people fled and were forced from the countryside, the organization by village, and thus by extended family and kin-based communal governance organizations, quickly deteriorated due to a lack of space.

As previously described, Padibe IDP camp residents, like other IDPs all over Acoliland, were mostly unable to access their “gardens” due to LRA attacks and UPDF security measures.

149 Including those who had returned to the camp after a stay in camps in Kitgum town.
Unpredictable and inconsistent food aid could not alleviate mass hunger and malnutrition (Dolan 2009:160). Diseases proliferated from the crowded and squalid living conditions, including tuberculosis, typhoid, malaria, HIV/AIDS, with periodic outbreaks of cholera. Aside from these dangers, camp residents also suffered looting, abductions, violence by the LRA, and intimidation and violence by the UPDF. Padibe IDP camp, like other camps, was often attacked by the LRA, and attacks were successful in Padibe camp in 2000, 2003, and 2004 with much looting, abductions, and killings.\textsuperscript{150}

By 2003, the lack of basic necessities and desperation within the IDP camps like Padibe spurred Jan Egeland’s (UN Under-secretary for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator) declaration of Northern Uganda as the “biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today.” International INGOs such as WFP, OXFAM, and MSF failed to keep up with the displaced population’s basic and unmet needs for food, water, latrines, and medicines (Branch 2011, Dolan 2009).\textsuperscript{151} Psychologically speaking, suicides, alcoholism, poisoning, and interpersonal violence rose greatly within the confines of the camps (Dolan 2009:165-168). Gender based violence also increased, due to how the camp’s disruption of life in the homestead and village transformed gender and generational roles in fundamental ways (Okello and Hovil 2007). Notably, Okello and Hovil cite that cramped camp conditions and diminishing respect for elders increased young women’s exposure to potential sources of abuse, and that young children living with other

\textsuperscript{150} There was also a fire in February of 2006, which burned most of the huts in Padibe IDP camp due to the overcrowded conditions, leaving camp residents with even less resources than they already had.

\textsuperscript{151} Branch gives a detailed account of how aid agencies “parceled out Acholiland, sub-county by sub-county, among themselves” (2011:95).
unrelated young children away from the parents’ huts in the camps did not provide parents and elders with the same monitoring capacities available in the homesteads (2007:442).

However, we know much less about camp residents’ lived daily experiences of these traumatic and devastating events and circumstances, and how they perceive the changes wrought by camp life. Many rural Acoli I’ve met over the years point out that the overpopulation and confinement from the camps caused severe social problems, and that the social disorder also resulted because different kinds of peoples, different lineages and sub-clans, had to live in such close proximity in the restricted area. Beatrice, who was 17 years old at the time she explained it to me, said “kaka were thrown together, all mixed up and squeezed in the camp. This also caused a lot of problems.” Mama and Auntie Santina also explained that living near people whom you didn’t know well, who did not have the same practices, whose exact histories you did not know, contributed to a sense of chaos and real social dis-organization within the camps.

As explored throughout this dissertation, a large degree of authority in the rural Padibe sub-counties lay (lies) with kin-based communal governance organizations, and their individual sub-clans’ and lineages’ practices. This authority is reinforced by the relative isolation (compared to the camps) of one sub-clan/village from another, as well as the low population density within the village itself. These factors reinforce the particular customs, judgments, and kit me kwo (ways of life) of the individual sub-clans/villages. Until the middle of the 20th century, when people disagreed with the practices or beliefs of their own kin-based communal organizations, they would simply separate and find new places to live. The “process of separation” (Girling 1960:56),

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or fission, was actually common in Acoli clans, both as a natural process of growth, and as a form of dealing with disagreement within the clan (see Chapter 3 for examples of this with Bobi and Pabwoc). Today, of course, that could still happen– people could leave–but acquiring large tracts of land to host future kin-villages is impossible. Therefore, a key difference today is that disagreement and conflict must be managed, or continuously lived with. Ongoing conflict management within the sub-clan or clan is therefore a feature of contemporary kin-based communal governance–a feature that was difficult to enact within the spatial disorganization and confines of the camps.

Within the village, everyone can see who comes and goes, and inquires where they are going and where they have come from. The resulting general awareness of village residents’ business, while not exactly surveillance, nonetheless provides a kind of social transparency because of the spatial dimensions of village life. Mergelsberg (2012) recounts how the settings in the IDP camps made the ideal model of mutuality and accountability impossible, which resulted in a moral crisis of the family. He describes how the visibility and resulting detailed knowledge about one’s activities and whereabouts–and thus familial accountability–that was common in village life was made impossible in the crowded, mixed-kin camp environment.152

The concentration of the entire rural population of Padibe sub-counties, in addition to many from two other sub-counties to the former trading center was akin to a very sudden

152 Although Mergelsberg (2012) describes a non-kin authority vigilante group that watched and disciplined people in Pabo camp, Padibe IDP camp did not have a similar organization.
and confined urbanization\textsuperscript{153} of about 42 000 people \textit{without} the spatial boundaries that served to enforce the kin-based communal governance organizations’ authority, necessary for conflict resolution, that also ideally works towards obligation, mutuality, and accountability in the village setting. A CSOPNU report from 2006 (pp.7) states that in some camps the population density was as high as 1,700 people per hectare, the equivalent of 170 000 per square kilometer (as previously described, it was about 70000 in Padibe IDP camp). In contrast, in Acoliland today, the average population density is 54 people per square kilometer (Atkinson and Hopwood 2013:24). During the village debates people also noted how congestion affected specific relational codes of conduct, for example in maintaining balanced gender relations, proper in-law prohibitions of respect, genealogical relations and knowledge, and rules regarding propriety and incest. Branch notes the spatial disparity between village and camp life, and suggests that “the physical setting of camps represented a general collapse of the spatial ordering that had regulated Acholi society” (2011:137). John Jaramagi Oloya comments on how the forced displacement of Acoli to the IDP camps led to a purposeful (by Government) “disintegration” of village households, which having been the foundation of the clans and sub-clans, eroded their authority (2015: 282).

While kin based communal governance organizations’ authority was undermined with a move to the camps, specifically from the disconnection between people and their lands, the rural population was at the same time exposed daily to an unprecedented amount of non-indigenous

\textsuperscript{153} Urbanization with completely insufficient infrastructure.
ideology and authority in the camps through increased contact with, and reliance for survival on, INGOs. Food, clean water, and sanitation facilities distributed by the INGOs augmented their authority, and as Lederach emphasizes, the delivery of aid is never apolitical, but includes the “packaging, presentation, and selling of social knowledge” (1995:6). This potent new authority within the camps presented social knowledge—in addition to practical tips on everything from preventing disease in squalid confines to not brewing alcohol as an income generating activity because it leads to violence—that was often perceived to contribute to the erosion of respect for parental and elder authority. The perceived hegemonic quality of NGOs’ social knowledge by adults and elders (though they were grateful for the food and aid) is akin to Makau Mutua’s exploration of how human rights, and the campaign to universalize them, “present a historical continuum in an unbroken chain of Western conceptual and cultural dominance over the past several centuries” (2001:210). Many adults and elders felt that their kit me kwo (ways of life), tekwaro itself, was disparaged by the teaching of NGOs, especially rights, as it pertained to their everyday life contexts. Many “sensitizations”, “programming”, and “outreach” disparaged indigenous forms of knowledge and knowing by advocating for: the rejection of so-called “harmful” or “backward cultural practices” including bridewealth, child labour, subsistence farming, and communal property stewardship, as examples. The creation of child rights’ clubs in many primary schools in the IDP camps, which were supposed to foster “opportunity for youth to discuss their own experiences and opinions on child rights” (War Child 2006) in displaced wartime contexts, in many instances fomented a further lack of respect for parental and elder authority. “Child rights” often provided the ideological justification to physically and psychologically suffering youth to disobey what little parental and kin-group authority remained
in the camp setting, further renting Acoli notions of relatedness. Group trainings ironically sought to teach people about the virtues and values of cooperation and communality.

Although exposure to INGO ideology also has, as Branch shows, “opened up transformative social space in Acoli society” (2011:137-142), which will be further discussed in Chapter 5, it was also complicit in the larger process by Government of “subordinate inclusion” of the Acoli with displacement that ultimately moved authority away from indigenous kin-based communal governance organizations during those years. Similarly, born-again churches also moved into the camp settings, and also created “programs.” Targeting youth and elders (depending on the church), they promised salvation, a cleansing of sins, and inner peace. Their ideology also openly labeled local, indigenous cultural practices as “satanic.” And again, while undoubtedly some of the churches’ teachings had positive effects (see Amone et al. 2013) like the Catholics and Protestants before them, as well as the Colonialists and INGOs, the belittling of indigenous knowledge and authority within the camp setting by churches, INGOs, and Government alike threatened social relations in fundamental ways that challenged inter-generational relations and attending local notions of relatedness. Added to the decrease in inter-generational activities, interactions, and engagements within the camp setting due to spatial and logistical ordering of camp life, because of people’s estrangement from their lands and subsistence farming, these factors were crucial, according to Padibe sub-counties’ residents, in the loss of *woro* and subsequent disengagement with *cuna* processes.

The next section attends to contemporary engagements with the *cuna* process and the resulting
inter-generational interactions, participation, and negotiation in the co-creation of social unions. Recognizing cuna processes as sites of negotiation, and of participation in one’s indigenous social, political, and moral community, I also assert that they must be considered as important sites for the creation and recreation of relatedness, and thus of social repair.

4.6 Contemporary Engagements with Cuna

I encountered so many situations that referenced people’s beliefs regarding fractured cuna processes and transformed practices regarding sexual unions from wartime, it is hard to pick just a few to explore. The cases cited below were brought to my awareness through friendships and not through surveys or debates. As anywhere in the world, friendship encompasses trust, and as such my friends shared their personal lives with me as a matter of sharing and openness of our relationship. With their consent, I try here to be as respectful as I can to their experiences.

4.6.1 Beatrice and Kilama

The first person to open my eyes to the gravity of issues involved with cuna was Beatrice. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, when I visited Beatrice in December of 2007, she was pregnant from a young man (who was in jail at the time of my visit), with no assurance of a formal union pending. Beatrice’s brothers had begun building houses back on their ancestral land, planning to return home later that year. Beatrice was waiting for her “husband”, the father of her unborn child, in the camp, hoping to move with him back to his land. Her situation, and that of her unborn child were precarious due to their unsanctioned union. This was mostly the case due to a continued lack of involvement of the couple’s extended families in negotiating bridewealth, luk, and balo kwan (as
mentioned earlier in the chapter, this was another kind of “fine” to compensate the woman’s family for an interruption to her studies from pregnancy). Later, in 2008, her husband, Kilama, was released, and they began to build a home together on his sub-clan’s land just on the outskirts of what was the camp.

They now have two sons and a daughter together, and in 2012 (when their second child was born), Beatrice’s brothers and extended family had begun the process of negotiating luk and bridewealth, which serves to legitimize Beatrice and her sons within her “husband’s” line. Beatrice farms on her husband’s lands, and enjoys the rights, and also the obligations and responsibilities, of residence. As Kilama very slowly pays luk and balo kwan to Beatrice’s family, their children, and Beatrice as well, become officially legitimized and incorporated in his own sub-clan. This happens concretely because of an actual exchange of funds, but socially because her husband has enlisted some adults and elders from his extended kin to negotiate with Beatrice’s extended kin. The involvement of both young people’s extended kin in these negotiations constitutes a kind of public contract, involving witnesses and initiating a range of social relationships that will assure the children’s, and Beatrice’s legitimation and rights within Kilama’s lineage and village. More important than the full financial transactions, it is the involvement of adults and elders from both partners’ kin-groups that legitimates the union and offspring. These inter-generational relationships are part of a vital process of building relatedness, of both legitimizing Beatrice, her husband’s, and her children’s status according to Acoli personhood and delineating their rights and responsibilities, as well as their participation, in their indigenous social, political, and moral community.
In this case, although their initial union was unsanctioned by their respective kin-groups, as many were and continue to be, the same framework of actions that functioned in the past to legitimize fathers, mothers, and children (inter-generational, inter-*kaka* negotiations and material exchange between the partners’ kin as part of the *cuna* process) also obviously work today towards rectifying the potential existential and material disorganization from unsanctioned unions and offspring in post-conflict contexts. Like Acoli work, it is processes that have historically created relatedness that also serve as frameworks (or boundary processes) to do so today. And creating, or re-creating a relatedness undefined by the violences of war and displacement is what I understand to be social repairing in rural Padibe today.

It is for these reasons that I posit the inter-generational negotiations and participation around *luk*, *balo kwan*, and *lim akumu* (bridewealth) that make up some of the *cuna* process, and the “righting” of social relationships and concepts of personhood that people believe were fractured during the war, as constituting important indigenous social repair practices. While it was also historically common before the war and camps for couples to be together before formal negotiations (Porter 2013, p’Bitek 1964), it was the continuing un-involvement of the man and woman’s extended kin during the camps and afterwards that is symptomatic of what people have identified as a “lost” *cuna* process. The perpetual inactivity of extended kin in couples’ lives, or the lack of engagement of young couples with their extended kin, is blamed on the lack of *woro*—respect for parents and elders—that fomented in the camp conditions.
In Beatrice and Kilama’s case, as in many others, much of the question regarding the regeneration of *woro* and involvement in *cuna* revolves around the fact that upon leaving the camp, Kilama made claims to land from his paternal sub-clan. As he becomes a husband and father outside of camp and war conditions, he must negotiate with, navigate, and participate in the kin-based communal governance organizations (lineage, sub-clan councils) that are responsible for land rights, among others, on ancestral village territory (if he chooses to stay in the village). Similar to the Acoli work needed with a return to the land that creates relatedness, here formerly disengaged (from kin-authority) young couples must re-engage and participate in inter-generational practices of governance (including *cuna*) primarily because of a return to the land, and the customary system of land tenure. *Cuna* is therefore a powerful boundary process that gathers people together in interactions without necessarily demanding immediate consensus. And as I will show with the next example, these interactions thus also serve as important sites for the learning (including appropriation, rejection, or adaption) of indigenous knowledge.

4.6.2 *Fiona and Augustine*

Augustine (the eldest son of my host family) and Fiona (his partner) were eager to follow traditional *cuna* processes. They met after the war and camp years, and together struggled to reconcile their desire to respect their families’ extended negotiations regarding elopement price, bridewealth, *balo kwan*, and *luk* (when their daughter was born in 2013) while still asserting their own independence and free will.

I describe their “official” courtship to attend to a completely different, and more intimately
detailed, example of engagement with the *cuna* process. The processes they undergo show the “usual” high degree of negotiation between the extended kin of both partners’ involved. Augustine, in 2011, and at 28 years old decided (with Fiona) to woo Fiona according to what they deemed traditional *cuna* practices. They are both from Padibe sub-counties. Although they had met the year before and were both interested in pursuing relations, he first checked with his uncles to be assured that they were not related in any way. Restrictions on whom one can marry (incest taboos) are far reaching in the contemporary rural Padibe sub-counties, and whole villages and groups of villages (sub-clans or clans) may be deemed ineligible for marriage through your father’s, mother’s, and grandmother’s lineages, for both of the youth in consideration. In fact, in a conversation with Pabwoc elders in 2015, they said that it should ideally be checked back seven generations— but that today, four or five generations is generally accepted.

For example, in Augustine’s case, Pabwoc, as well as all Bobi villages (sub-clans) and daughters of the Bobi clan found elsewhere are perpetually off-limits for marriage. All villages (sub-clans) of Panvinga clan, as well as all daughters of Panvinga are also off limits through his mother’s side for a minimum of four generations (down to Mama’s great great grandchildren). All villages (sub-clans) of Pamot, and daughters of the Pamot clan are also off limits through his paternal grandmother for a minimum of four generations. And that is only the beginning, and on Augustine’s side! The elders of both partners’ will also trace Fiona’s genealogy to assure that their relations do not mix, or are deemed far enough away to be acceptable for marriage.

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154 As they were in 1949 when Girling conducted much of his research (1960:65).
155 I only mention daughters here because unions between any unrelated males are also not sanctioned. Homosexuality is condemned by both kin-based communal governance organizations and the National Government.
Before things could really get underway in any sense, Augustine also had to inquire with Fiona and her family whether he may be accepted as a potential suitor. He faced an uphill battle. Apparently, there was a much older man from Kitgum who liked Fiona, and who had offered to pay full bridewealth immediately. Unlike him, Augustine was one of nine children from a subsistence farming family,\textsuperscript{156} and although University educated, had no steady employment. While Fiona had convinced her mother that she loved Augustine, and not this man from Kitgum, her grandmother was tougher to convince. Eventually, through Fiona and Augustine’s stubbornness and persistence, the grandmother accepted.

Although Augustine had a small room in the center and graduated from University, and Fiona finished all her secondary schooling (rare for boys and girls alike, but especially for girls), graduated from teacher’s college and was employed as a primary school teacher in Kitgum district, they still pursued traditional cuna. Their negotiations with their own kin, and the ensuing multifaceted negotiations between their kin, constitute their engagements with tekwaro through cuna. And, in my understanding, these engagements serve to elaborate relatedness, thus social repairing in these post-conflict contexts. I was present at many of the key moments of their cuna process in 2012.

The first time that Augustine brought Fiona to the homestead, for example, she was brought to my

\textsuperscript{156} Baba is a teacher in the technical school, but his salary of approximately 75$/month is not enough to pay for his children’s school fees, exam fees, uniforms, supplies etc. He gets help from his brother who lives in Gulu town (but who also has a low teacher’s salary), and now Augustine, his follower, Ojara, and myself are responsible for the children’s secondary school fees as well.
house as my “guest.” After I brought her bag in and gave her a place to sit, I was greeted with a knock on my door by the two Aunties, as well as Augustine’s father’s brother’s wife, with the saying “apwoyo kelo welo” (thank you for bringing a visitor). The women, except Augustine’s mother, joined us for lunch inside, which Mama had prepared in her own kitchen, and Fiona left before dark. They followed traditional practice whereby Fiona is not supposed to eat meat on that visit, nor is she supposed to eat with Augustine’s mother for the first few visits. According to Auntie Santina, on her first visit, after receiving a small amount of money from a female relative, Fiona could eat whatever is prepared except for meat. This occurred, and as Auntie Santina discreetly tucked a crumpled shilling note under the lip of Fiona’s bowl, she finally began to eat. Small amounts of money are given to Fiona throughout the different visits to symbolize advancement to the next “level” of familiar relations—symbolized through the gradual sharing of different kinds of food; finally sharing all foods with Augustine’s mother. The female relatives thus have substantial control in this intimate aspect of the *cuna* process.

I was also present when Fiona came to stay in the village for a week. This was her second official visit—and was different than the first as she was no longer under the guise of my “guest.” Augustine had also, in the meanwhile, visited Fiona’s mother with a friend, removing his shoes in front of the home, and crawled in on his knees. Augustine’s family also had time to fully check-up on Fiona’s background and had approved the union. Although formal negotiations between them had not begun, the prospective partners had loosely obtained consent of both their kin. On that second visit, Augustine’s father welcomed Fiona, and ceremoniously, everyone present, including Uncle, Baba’s brother, Mama, the Aunties, and myself, added words of welcome and wisdom. It
was a step in *cuna*, what could be seen as part of the official engagement process. Fiona stayed with Augustine in his house that time, and cooked in the main kitchen with Aciro (The LC1’s daughter who was adopted by my host family), Augustine’s sister (who was home from school on holiday), and Mama. In addition to food preparation, she also took on all the family chores that week including fetching water, washing clothes, and gardening.

Fiona had planned to visit her family (who lived closer to the center) for a few days before returning to her school teaching job in another district, but unexpectedly, to Augustine and everyone else, stayed in the village with us for a few extra days. Nobody thought much about it, until we returned to the homestead one evening after a youth group *wang oo*. Augustine had finally dropped Fiona at her mother’s home, near the center, earlier that day. When we returned that evening, he received a letter from Fiona’s family. They accused him of “eloping” with Fiona, and demanded funds for the transgression. Greatly disturbed, Augustine exclaimed that he had tried to do everything right…and with respect…clearly embarrassed and exasperated; he didn’t know what to do! His mother heard us arrive and Augustine talking loudly, and she emerged from the kitchen house and asked what was wrong as he was obviously in great distress. When he told her, she laughed. Augustine and I were both so worried and stressed out, that her laughing was a great, and very surprising shock. She explained that he should let his father and uncles handle this all from now on, and that it was merely part of the whole bargaining and negotiating process of *cuna*!

I had, and still have, the opportunity to see how these negotiations play out in Augustine and
Fiona’s case. I get email updates from Augustine, and he informs me of Fiona’s family’s demands—for example, they had a daughter in late 2013 and Fiona’s family is now demanding *luk*. All this in addition to the negotiations already begun regarding the “elopement” and bridewealth.

In Augustine and Fiona’s case, their union was never unsanctioned by their extended kin per se. However, I still consider their own negotiations with their kin, as well as the negotiations of their extended kin with each other as vital processes of social repair in these contexts. Their engagement with the inter-generational, extended kin participation of the *cuna* processes itself is what creates relatedness in their rural contexts. Both partners’ also acquire indigenous knowledge through these processes, tracing their extended genealogies to assure compliance with incest taboos, experientially learning *tekwaro* (like pretending to be a guest or not eating with your fiancé’s mother, as examples). In these post-conflict and post-displacement contexts, the *cuna* process itself (like the Acoli work described in Chapter 3) serves as a vital site for re-engagement with and subsequent learning of *tekwaro*, of creating relatedness beyond the categorizations of the violence experienced, of participating in one’s social, political, and moral community, and thus performing social repair.

4.6.3 Other *cuna* considerations

At the formal event of a “traditional” Acoli wedding I attended in Padibe West in 2012, the groom’s party was supposed to arrive the evening before the festivities. They arrived quite late as they were traveling from a different district, and upon their arrival were escorted into the “traditional” mud and grass thatched roof house (which stood next to a large *Mbati*) to supposedly conclude
bridewealth negotiations. This final negotiation between the parties continued for hours on end (all night) before the festivities were actually able to begin. Augustine was invited to witness these negotiations, as he was related to the bride through his paternal grandmother. Uncle Pacoto, referred to in the papaya story that opened this chapter, was also the eldest living uncle of the bride, and was present. Augustine recounted that many penalties or compensations, calculated in money, clothing and fabric gifts, and livestock, were demanded by the extended kin party of the bride from the groom’s for supposed improprieties: bringing used clothing as gifts, for not placing the gifts on a nice doily, for being late, for not announcing oneself at a sufficient distance from the village, for not giving a nice enough goat to the uncles, etc. for hours on hours on end. The groom’s kin, on the other hand, tried to defend their position with points of their own. All actual or supposed breaches of respect between the extended kin contribute to this ongoing negotiation and exchange, which establishes bonds and social relationships between the bride and groom’s extended kin. Like Beatrice and Kilama’s, and Augustine and Fiona’s cases, the extended negotiations themselves, the activation of a range of social relations and witnessing that creates a type of social contract is as much at the heart of the final bridewealth negotiations, as throughout the entire cuna process. This witnessing and activation of a range of social relations, as well as the indigenous knowledge learned by the partners throughout the entire cuna process (genealogies, practices) is thus a primary site for the elaboration of relatedness, and therefore is also a primary site for social repair in these post-conflict contexts.

To further demonstrate the prevalence of issues relating to cuna, in the homestead where I lived there are many examples, aside from Augustine and Fiona’s, of unsuccessful or incomplete
engagements with the cuna process by youth and extended kin alike. Docus, Auntie’s teenage daughter, became pregnant while studying in Gulu. The school dismissed her and she went to live with the father’s (of the yet unborn child’s) relatives. However Docus said that the young man’s relatives in Panyinga (within the Padibe sub-counties) refused to take good care of her. She returned to her mother at my host family’s homestead in Pabwoc East, where she now lives with her daughter. The failure of the father, and the father’s kin, of Docus’ child to properly engage in the cuna process leaves Docus and her child more vulnerable, especially if Docus seeks marriage someday. As explained to me by many young women, prospective suitors do not often want the added uncertainty of caring for a child whom is not their own, because the biological father may suddenly, and has the right to suddenly, pay luk to come and claim the child.157

Okot (Mama and Baba’s fourth born son) had a child with a girl from the same clan (a different sub-clan/village). This is considered grave incest, and when extended kin found out that he was the father, the separation ceremony of tucu romo had to be performed, officially severing all relations (and thus all parental responsibilities) between Okot and the woman and child.158 Okot does not truly accept the outcome, though he publicly accepted and underwent the ritual. Baba was distraught, telling me: “the father of that girl is like my brother. He could even care for Mama when I die.” When I asked Augustine about it, he said that the woman’s brothers are very fierce

157 As he was reviewing my final draft, Augustine informed me that Docus had become pregnant again by the same young man, and she accepted to go and live in the husband’s place now. Different women I spoke with reacted differently to this element of claiming children and their future marriage prospects. For Docus however, this was just a fact–the way it is.
158 The tucu romo ceremony, briefly, involves the slaughter of a sheep by piercing his stomach. Before that occurs, the mother, father, and aunties of the two who committed “inappropriate relations” spit into the mouth of the sheep. If the sheep dies quietly, it is said that the separation will be peaceful.
and that Okot would be in great danger if he hadn’t (and doesn’t) comply with complete separation.

My host family’s eldest child, a daughter named Concy, was living with a man in Gulu town (they had met during the war years), and despite having two children, no meetings or negotiations between the couple’s families had yet begun. During my fieldwork in 2012, Baba traveled with his brother to visit the husband to “follow up the girl” (*lupo kor nyako*), but as the couple had become born-again Christians, the husband refused to enter traditional *cuna*-related negotiations. Baba said that it was just an excuse, that he might have to find the man’s relatives on his own, but that he would give it some time. If the man and the man’s family refused to enter any negotiations, then he “should” go and collect the children and bring them to live in Pabwoc. Although that never happened, in terrible circumstances when Concy died suddenly in 2013, the husband brought the children to live in Pabwoc on his own volition. They remain there today.

I include these further engagements (or dis-engagements) with the *cuna* process to show two things. One, the uncertainty that couples or mothers and their children face when their unions remain outside of the legitimizing sphere of extended kin negotiations and participation. And second, that *cuna* issues and processes themselves are core sites for the creation and negotiation of relatedness, including rights and obligations, that also acts for couples, or individual mothers and fathers, as a kind on initiation and negotiation through participation into their rural social, political, and moral communities. Although inter-generational engagement in *cuna* processes have not been invented to specifically deal with problems from the war and displacement, like Acoli
work, I consider them vital frameworks for processes of social repair grounded by the land and customary tenure, in these rural village contexts. It is thus that I argue that in seeking to understand how individuals and communities in rural Acoliland rebuild and “move on” after the war, that we must consider Acoli communities’ engagement (though not static reproduction) with indigenous knowledge that generates and re-generates relatedness, and that thus participates in the creation and continuous re-creation of an Acoli indigenous legal order, of social, political and moral community not wholly defined by the violence experienced during the war years.

4.7 Conclusion

Both woro and cuna are expressions of the centrality of relatedness in Acoli life. Woro is reflective of inter-generational relationship norms, which then also extend to cuna, the creation of new marital social relationships (and thus households) within the context of inter-generational relationships between kin groups. Social uncertainty from perpetually unsanctioned unions thus fundamentally affects the attainment of these local ideals of relatedness that also regulate the rights and obligations of everyday life in rural Acoliland. As demonstrated here, not participating in traditional courtship practices (cuna), during and in the years since the war and camps, belies the lack of woro, respect for parents and elders, and by proxy, also respect for parental and elder authority manifest in the kin-based communal governance organizations. According to residents of the Padibe sub-counties, the lack of woro resulted from the spatial, logistical, and ideological delineations of camp life and resulted in, among other things, youth’s disengagement with the cuna process. This lack of engagement denies the activation of extended multi-generational relations and involvement of those relations within a couple’s union, and consequently, can isolate
a couple from participation in, and therefore initiation into, their indigenous social, political, and moral community.

Analyzing contemporary negotiations around courtship as constitutive of indigenous social repair practices acknowledges the ways that *cuna*, and the *woro* necessary to engage in *cuna*, create a framework for interactions that elaborate and re-elaborate relatedness. I thus acknowledge these practices regarding the regulation of social reproduction as another important boundary process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016). It is the required inter-generational engagement with *tekwaro* that allows for the fluidity, both historically and in contemporary contexts, of *cuna* processes. *Cuna*, as an example, also indicates how biology is not fundamental, in and of itself, to relatedness. It is rather the actions that recognize the biological link (children of the father recognized through *luk*) that is constitutive of relatedness. This participatory kinship, or participatory aspect of relatedness is important, and centers how notions of “nature” themselves (as in biological parenthood) are not enough to understand relatedness in context. And, consequently, how participatory relatedness practices, like Acoli work and *cuna* grounded by the land and the system of land tenure, are vital to making and remaking social relations.

Rather than theorizing practices that engage people in *tekwaro*, like courtship, as static reproductions of social power and authority, I attend to these practices as sites of interaction, encounter, engagement, and negotiation both between and about gender and generational rights, responsibilities, and authority. The next chapter specifically looks at the “sub-clan” and
relatedness, and considers the new constitution of the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation as a written document that performs, as well as represents, participatory relatedness and the responsibilities enacted therein.

Attending to cuna processes show that important social repair practices are based on social interactions that create and re-create relatedness, and that depends on the multi-generational engagement, negotiation, and appropriation of tekwaro. The same processes of indigenous knowledge, or tekwaro, that have historically served as sites for the creation of personhood, of the negotiation of relations, and for engagement with the kin-based communal governance organizations, like Acoli work explored in Chapter 3, and cuna discussed here, must also be recognized as important practices of social repairing in these post-conflict and post-displacement settings. A return to ancestral land, in both the cases of Acoli work and cuna is what anchors these relatedness-making practices that serve to re-gather people as participants in their indigenous social, political, and moral communities.
Chapter 5: *Kaka, the Sub-clan: “I Would Have Marched With My Kaka Too”*

5.1 Introduction

I arrived quite early one morning to the center in the wet season to visit Beatrice. It was quite an ordinary, dewy June morning until I found my way to Kilama and Beatrice’s homestead, and found Anena, Kilama’s then 12-year old sister, at home. I was surprised that she was home as she attended, and excelled, in the primary school close to the center in Anyibi, about a 15-minute walk from their place. When I asked her why she was home, she replied, quite solemnly, that the school sent everyone home because of *luk kwo*. I was a little confused—I understood the term *luk kwo* to mean, roughly, the compensation for a death (literally, *luk* is a kind of fine (p’Bitek 1971), *kwo* is life), where the sub-clan (kin-based communal governance organization) of the killer pays the sub-clan of the victim as part of a system of conflict resolution in Acoli law ways. I asked “*culu kwo?*” (referring to the more commonly referenced way of saying payment for a life in academic texts to be sure I understood) and Anena said yes. I asked if she was ok, if she wanted me to sit with her for a while, but she said that she was all right, and that she was going to start the washing. I asked again if she wanted me to stay with her, but she smiled and said that she was really o.k. So, I asked her to tell Beatrice that I had stopped by to visit and that I was going to the youth group’s office in the center.

As I made my way down the footpath away from Beatrice’s place, I headed to Padibe Town Council, the center, to visit the youth group’s office. I was curious about *luk kwo* and why a
school would send home all their students early, and wanted to ask if anyone there knew anything about it.

The office was on one of two small dirt roads that branched from the main dirt road (that joined Kitgum town to Sudan) and strip of shops in the center. Because the newly installed power from December of 2011 went down in a storm in March of 2012, they used a generator to power their computer and printer when necessary. The office was not usually full, as staff members were usually out “in the field” working with their village cultural groups, but Leomoi was around. I greeted him, and then asked if he had heard about the luk kwo in Anyibi. He had.

The murder story he told me that morning was quite gruesome, but it was the topic of conversation and speculation at every gathering I was at for the next few weeks, at least. I recount the details here because it is through this tragic event that I learned how, quite literally and with different liabilities, a whole sub-clan is morally and materially responsible for the actions of one of its members, and that the sub-clan in rural Acoli functions in many ways as a common, corporate “legal” entity. It therefore deepened my understanding of how the responsibilities and obligations between kaka sub-clan members serve not only as a means of interdependence for survival and subsistence, as explored in previous chapters, but how these responsibilities are also central to conflict resolution and social order between kaka (between villages, parishes, sub-counties, districts) throughout Acoliland as well.
Although much has been written about kin groups as “corporate groups” and “collective responsibility” in the past elsewhere (see particularly Evans-Pritchard 1965, lineages as corporate decent groups; Radcliffe-Brown 1931, equivalence of siblings),\textsuperscript{159} I was unsure of the application of the concepts to contemporary relatedness in rural Acoliland. Frankly, I thought I understood the idea of the corporate nature of the sub-clan, or sub-clan members’ interdependence in Acoli historically, in relation to land tenure for example, where individuals gain and inherit property rights, mostly based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence from and within the \textit{kaka} (Girling 1960:58). As described in previous chapters, while individuals have rights to specific plots of lands, the village lands as a whole are stewarded by the sub-clan through various levels of kin-based communal governance organizations and presumably, through Government’s formal acknowledgement of customary tenure. Additionally, common lands within the village are used for communal cattle grazing (\textit{olet}). This corporate nature of the sub-clan is not talked about explicitly in Acoli literature, however Girling touches on the subject when he describes how compensation for death differs when murder occurs within a clan, from murder that occurs between clans.\textsuperscript{160} In the former case, compensation (a cow or money) is not given because it would be “merely taking something out of the right hand and putting it in the left” (Girling 1960:67), because the livestock that was traditionally paid formed part of the common wealth of the clan. Although individuals, extended families, or lineages within the

\textsuperscript{159} See also discussions of collective responsibility in corporate kin-groups as explored by Kopytoff (1964), Gulliver (1963), Colson (1959), and Wilson (1987), as examples.

\textsuperscript{160} Which also references Evans-Pritchard’s description of blood feuds (1965).
sub-clan in Padibe own cattle privately, the cows, like land, are considered part of the sub-clan’s greater economic holdings. This is especially accentuated in times of crisis, like a murder for example, when the corporate or communal holdings of the sub-clan are relied upon and required for compensation. Others have more recently described this same element in contemporary Acoli “traditional justice” mechanisms by noting that after a murder, compensation is paid by the perpetrator’s entire clan to the victim’s clan (JRP 2005, Porter 2013). Thomas Harlacher, who looked at “traditional” ways of coping with traumatic stress in Acoli, particularly emphasizes that the offender’s clan, and not the offender as a single person, must assume moral responsibility for the act committed, in addition to the material readiness and ability to pay compensation (2009:187).

Other scholars have described yet another element of “collective responsibility” in Acoli, by discussing cen, variously described as “unhappy spirits of the dead” (Finnström 2008), “ghostly vengeance” (p’Bitek 1971), “polluting spirits” (Allen 2010), and “vengeance ghosts” (Harlacher et al. 2006) of someone who died a wrongful or violent death or of someone who was treated with disrespect when dead. Cen can invade a person’s body and cause madness, illness, immoral behaviour, and even death. It is pointed out that cen is not restricted to an individual perpetrator him/herself, but that it can afflict any member of the perpetrator’s family, extending to the whole clan, and that it can continue to afflict a

161 This notion has been discussed by Gulliver (1963:128) and Moore (2000:116) who emphasize that individually owned property within a self-identified group often serves as a resource in which to pay “legal” claims.

162 These authors use the term clan, but technically in rural Padibe, these kinds of relationships and responsibilities can also correlate with the sub-clan or lineage depending.
perpetrators’ clan relations for future generations to come (Harlacher 2009:171, JRP 2012a:2). Notably, Harlacher also notes that cen is the most widespread popular interpretation of what he calls “mental illness”, in post-conflict Acoliland (2009).

Before this incident, however, I understood very little of how “collective responsibility” of the clan, or sub-clan, functioned today, or even if it actually functioned today in rural Acoli. Yet understanding the realities and nuances of collective sub-clan responsibilities—the scope and texture of responsibilities both to and within the sub-clan, and in relation to Parish, Sub-county, National, and International justice—has led me to better appreciate the ways in which Acoli law ways influence how people “move on” and perform social repair after the violence experienced during the recent years of war and displacement.

Furthermore, considering what collective responsibilities consist of both within the group as well as to outsiders, acknowledges that there are a number of limitations to this liability; including the breached relationship in question, inner-sub-clan politics, former breaches by the individual, and the nature of the breach and the possible necessity of referral of the individual’s breach to the Parish, Sub-county, and National courts.  

163 I use the term breach and crime in common here, after Turner’s (1996) definition of breach as the non-satisfaction of normalized rights or obligations between persons or groups within the same overall system of social relations. I do so to explore the individuals’ relations to the sub-clan in times of breach, however I do so cautiously with acknowledgement that the “non-satisfaction of rights and obligation” are one facet, among many, of experienced violent crimes.
Despite these nuances and limitations however, the nature of the responsibilities between sub-clan members, most dramatically illustrated in the collective responsibilities of the sub-clan in times of breach regarding those outside the sub-clan, still provides instructive insight into why so much interest and attention is given to upbringing and enculturation—in bringing youth “into” culture so to speak. Throughout this dissertation, I argue that being “in” tekwaro refers to an Acoli relatedness, a participatory morality of kinship and indigenous legal order created and re-created through engagement with Acoli indigenous knowledge, grounded in the land. These practices of engagement are key in understanding the processes that perform social repair in these post-conflict contexts because of how they elaborate relatedness, and thus participation in one’s social, political, and moral community. Rather than referencing specific violences experienced during the war, I learned instead that social repair in rural Padibe “brackets away” the violence in order to re-elaborate relatedness outside of violence’s signifying power, provoked by a return to the land (finally explored later in this chapter).

Earlier, Chapter 3 explored the history of Pabwoc, as well as the kaka affiliations (through the Padibe Chiefdom) of the current villages in the Padibe sub-counties. I considered ngom kwaro (ancestral land) as the idiom of relatedness in rural Padibe, and examined how tic Acoli, Acoli work activities centered on the land, necessitate, create, and foster the learning of tekwaro that activates a kin-based participatory relatedness, that itself should be conceptualized as social repairing. Chapter 4 unpacked the concept of woro, detailing how inter-generational respect is a prerequisite to engagement in inter-generational practices
that work to re-elaborate relatedness. I then explored why contemporary engagement in
the *cuna* (traditional courtship) framework provides an important site of social repair due
to the activation of inter-generational and inter-sub-clan relations that engages young
couples in *tekwaro*, and thereby in their social, political, and moral communities.

Building on these foundations, this chapter examines how the sub-clan, *kaka*, its land-
relations, and the social organization shaped by customary tenure, promulgate social,
political, moral, and legal responsibilities between *kaka* members, and between different
*kaka*, to pursue a relatively stable social reality. Notably, I use the term “relatively stable” to
clearly acknowledge that social stability is never the absence of conflict, but the ability and
capacity to negotiate and manage conflict (as seen exemplary in Turner 1996, and more
recently in regards to kinship, Reece N.d.). I thus consider how and why identification with
and participation in *kaka*, and *ribbe kaka* (clan or sub-clan unity, joining), and the
responsibilities associated therein, are key to the conception and practices of re-
elaborating relatedness, and thus to social repairing, in these post-conflict rural contexts.

Questions about “making home alive again” after war and displacement as treated in this
dissertation are framed as social repairing, as acts of learning *tekwaro*, including
negotiating and appropriating, and with how engaging with *tekwaro* re-elaborates
relatedness itself. While I have attended to social repair in rural Padibe as particularly
embodied in various boundary processes, as explored for example in Acoli work and
courtship practices (*tic Acoli* and *cuna*) in previous chapters, it is important to acknowledge
and explore the potential possibilities of how these relational practices work to imagine and build a participatory social, political, and moral community. I argue here that the corporate, collective responsibilities implied in kaka relations are important in understanding these processes.

As I said before, the details of the murder are disturbing. First, the crime in question is itself horrid. Second, the detailing of how Acoli indigenous law functions in this case, and others, complicates popular notions of restorative indigenous law as only healing. I do this hesitantly, and only because I believe that by describing the full range of events in a case such as this, I heed Indigenous legal scholars Napoleon and Friedland’s assertion that emphasizing indigenous law as only healing flattens complex law, or complex indigenous legal thought (2014:13-14). They assert that this flattening is done primarily because of the ways in which force is (usually) monopolized by the State. I thus include the story here so that the full range of practices, including the punitive or coercive ones, could lead to a fuller understanding of kaka responsibilities in terms of Acoli indigenous law, and hence a better appreciation of what being “in tekwaro” and relatedness might mean to social repair in rural Padibe today.

164 Undoubtedly, this promotion of the healing aspects have been done strategically in Acoliland in efforts for local communities to gain some form of control over the kind of “justice” employed during and after the war. Particularly in response to the International Criminal Court’s indictment (in 2005) of what were the top five commanders of the LRA. See Maxine Kamari Clarke for in-depth discussions of hierarchies of knowledge, power, and control of resources involved in producing the “fictions” of justice (2009). Also, as will be seen later in the chapter, promoting only the end results of the indigenous legal process—the healing and forgiveness aspects—was deemed necessary by many in Acoliland in consideration of the scale and breadth of the crimes committed.
To that end, I will give a full recount of the events around the *luk kwo* that I heard about that dewy morning. Analyzing the interdependent nature of the corporate *kaka* (sub-clan), I emphasize, as many others have philosophically asserted (particularly Okot p'Bitek 1986:19), that the Western-imagined individual does not legally or morally exist—in this case here in rural Acoliland—without relational consideration. I will then examine the implications of these assertions regarding responsibilities and relationship in considering crimes or breach committed during the war, and the ways in which individuals and communities in rural Padibe “bracket away” the violence experienced (both perpetrated and received) from everyday life and relationships because of the ways that the violences experienced during the war transgresses these concepts. Finally, I describe an initiative of Pabwoc’s kin-based communal governance organization, the writing of a constitution for the creation of a non-profit Foundation. This initiative demonstrates both a contemporary re-elaboration of *kaka* responsibilities and relationship, and its capacity to act as a boundary process (objects; Star 2010, Star and Griesemer 1989, process; McKellin 2016) that promotes multi-generational participation in the articulation of indigenous knowledge, as manifest in *kaka* relations, and that tries to address, negotiate, and incorporate many social transformations that occurred during the war years. Importantly, one of the main impetuses for the initiative was also to seek more secure land tenure for the sub-clan. Because of its gathering capacities, of the ways in which the writing of the constitution *ribbe kaka* (fosters sub-clan unity) by engaging multiple generations in learning and

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165 In African philosophy, as an example, the individual does technically exist, just far differently than in Western philosophy (for example, as explored by Wiredu (1996) and Hountondji (1983).
adapting tekwaro, I examine it as a particularly poignant practice of social repairing in post-war, post-displacement, and contemporary global land rush (RRI 2012) contexts, whereby the protection of their communal lands, the idiom of relatedness itself, is paramount.

5.2 A Very Terrible Story

A 21 year-old woman, wife and mother, of Lumura village was murdered–she was found cut into pieces in a bag in Pager River near Kitgum town. Her husband, of Anyibi village, had not been around for a few years; presumably he had been pursuing business in Sudan. It was believed that her husband returned from Sudan, called and asked to meet her, and then murdered her. The murderer then phoned his father’s brother in their village of Anyibi (his father was dead), and without telling them what he had done, told them to evacuate the village for fear of culu kwo. The killer had not returned.

Just as Leomoi finished telling me the gist of the story on that chilly morning, there was a commotion outside the youth group’s office. On the main road, men and women of all ages from Lumura village were marching towards Anyibi, with bows and arrows, and sticks in hand. They were silent, with their eyes wide and focused straight ahead. They walked slowly, in broad daylight, on the most visible road to their destination. The look in their eyes was a mix of outrage, anger, sorrow, determination, pain, and pride. Everyone near the main street of the center gathered outside the shops, huts, houses, and by the roadside to watch the procession silently. No one interfered.
As previously recounted, I had read about *culu or luk kwo* in relation to death compensation in Girling’s “The Acholi” (1960:66-67), in p'Bitek's “Religion of the Central Luo” (1971:131), and in the report “Roco Wat I Acoli” (JRP 2005), but had never seen a manifestation of a so called “blood feud” in Acoliland where one's kin seeks to obtain compensation, *culu kwo*, through what was termed “blood revenge.” I wondered if a retributive death was possible or expected. The air was heavy—hearts and livers were heavy—and it took a long time for all the witnesses, including Leomoi and myself, to leave the roadside. The center was eerily silent.

I eventually tried to send some emails home from the office, and then Beatrice came to see me as Anena had told her where I was. Leomoi and Beatrice discussed what they each knew about the incident, and then Beatrice and I talked a bit, and then I walked her part way home. After that, I had an interview scheduled with Rwot Odoki (Chief or Rwot of Padibe) and started walking towards his house, near Lai (about 3 km south of Padibe center—towards Pabwoc, and away from Anyibi). Augustine found me on the way, and we continued our day together. Rwot interview, visit to Pabwoc to check on the house and to share lunch, and then he dropped me back at the Sisters’ place before dark. It was only after I returned to the Sisters’ and sat down to supper with the four nuns that I received a full update on the *culu kwo* incident.

The four Sisters were all Ugandan, and three of them were Acoli. I had known two of them since 2006—and variously interacted with them as my hosts (I stayed at the Mission in 2006
2007, and 2010), friends, and nurses (in my suspect cholera case of 2007) over the years. I also visited, ate, and occasionally cooked with them when I passed through the center. They often spoke in English around the dinner table because one of the Sisters (the non-Acoli one), didn’t speak Acoli. They had also heard about the terrible Anyibi-Lumura incident.

They filled me in on the happenings since I had witnessed the march that morning. The people of Lumura arrived at Anyibi to find a deserted village. They proceeded to burn houses, kill livestock (and later take those left alive) and uproot the fields—all actions that are considered grave abominations or *kiir*, to Acoli (O’Byrne 2015, JRP 2005:111-112, JRP 2007, Porter 2013:100-106).166 The police were drawn to the place, arrested some people, but were unable to stop the general destruction. After “some few” hours, the *Riyo Tal* (whose translated title means “putting the stick”—to represent separating two opposing sides in a dispute) from *Kal Kwaro* Padibe arrived, and the people of Lumura ceased their activities. They then left Anyibi for home, and were awaiting *Kal Kwaro*’s negotiations between the villages (sub-clans) over *culu kwo*—the formal, recognized verdict about compensation for the murder.

*Kal Kwaro* Padibe is a kin-based communal governance organization, headed by Rwot of Padibe (Rwot Odoki at that time, the 24th *Rwot* of Padibe), with an executive council of representatives of the clans and sub-clans in what was the Padibe “Chiefdom”

166 As p’Bitek explains, these *kiir* are often deliberate acts committed by people who find themselves in an “intolerable social position” (1971:145).
(contemporary Padibe West and East sub-counties). The council meets twice a month (unless there is an incident), and there were eleven men and two women who served on Kal Kwaro Padibe’s executive council in 2012. Their responsibilities include caring for the major shrine (abila), and performing rain rituals, and mediating or negotiating conflict resolution in inter-sub-clan, inter-clan, or inter-kingdom (roughly sub-county) incidents, especially those pertaining to death and murder.\(^{167}\)

I wondered aloud why Kal Kwaro waited so long to break it up, and was answered by one of the Sisters that it was only prudent to let Lumura get some of it out of their systems–that it was too dangerous, and in fact not fair, to try to stop them earlier. One of them even said that she would have participated if such a terrible thing had befallen her clan. I have since heard many people, of all ages and professions say the same thing regarding this incident, “I would have marched with my kaka too.”\(^{168}\)

\(^{167}\) The Riyo Tal’s role is literally to break apart fights so that negotiations can commence. Among the Kal Kwaro Padibe executives in 2012, there was a youth representative, a women’s representative, and a representative responsible for security. The council meets on the 15\(^{th}\) and 30\(^{th}\) of every month.

\(^{168}\) In the next four months I was told about three more local events, involving beatings and accidental murders that played out along similar lines in terms of sub-clan responsibilities, accountabilities, and retributions. In one instance, sub-county and district governments became involved after several Kal Kwaro were unable to resolve the disputed issue that included different understandings of the responsibilities of the parties involved. This incident included three different sub-clans from three different Kal Kwaro (Padibe, Madi, and Palabek). A fourth Kal Kwaro, this time the Rivot of Puronga, came in to help mediate when misunderstanding between Kal Kwaro Padibe and Palabek occurred. The third sub-clan (neither the victim nor the killer’s sub-clan) became involved when the victim’s sub-clan sought directions/information about the killer’s sub-clan’s village. After an attack by the victim’s sub-clan on the killer’s sub-clan/village, the killer’s sub-clan subsequently attacked the sub-clan that had given directions to their place. This tipped off another attack, this time the “directions” sub-clan on the killer’s sub-clan. At this point, the disagreement on responsibilities, and the havoc that ensued, necessitated the involvement of four Kal Kwaro, as well as Sub-county and District government.
Three days after the initial incident (the march, not the murder), there were still some people of Lumura jailed in the center. Others from Lumura marched on the police station with sticks etc. to get their people released, and succeeded. Apparently, the LC3 (who is actually of Pabwoc) of Padibe West sub-county (where Lumura is situated) also said that he called the police to reason with them that they should be released, and that Kal Kwaro was brokering peace between the sub-clans.

The next day Augustine and I had a meeting with the director of the technical school in the center where the youth group wanted to hold their cultural competition. The school was right next to the Mission, and as we walked over we saw the director, Owiro Luke, sitting alone with his head bent over in the center of the school’s shadowy courtyard. He was utterly lost in thought, and I thought, sadness. I asked if everything was ok, and Augustine gave me a sideways glance...The man answered that his sub-clan was bankrupt...just bankrupt because of one boy, who had been like a son to him. That he was speechless over what this son had done, and didn't know what to do for the village (sub-clan).

I understood then that the director was an elder from Anyibi and the killer’s father’s brother (called father, Acoli use classificatory kin terms). We never asked him about this, but he was so distraught; and he proceeded to tell us how he had cared for the boy\textsuperscript{169}...he

\textsuperscript{169} He uses the term boy even though the killer was in his 20s. I believe this is partially done because he helped raise the man, his brother’s son.
didn’t know what had happened... and then he spoke about the very high price of *culu kwo* which was, minus the loss calculated in the damage caused within Anyibi village, still set at 4.5 million shillings (roughly 6-8 cows depending)...and where were they going to find the funds...and the utter destruction that had been wrought in the village—burnt houses, destroyed crops, killed and looted livestock...again repeating, “he has destroyed us, he has destroyed us....” He kept shaking his head...looking at the ground.... He then said that he thinks that the boy (killer) should go straight to the courts if found and never be allowed to return, because “he has sent our clan to hell.” He is literally disowning/banishing the man from the clan with this sentiment.

The image of this man will forever be with me—alone in the school compound, surrounded by the dark shadows of mid-day trees, mourning the dire fate of his whole sub-clan because of the actions of one of its sons. We sat with him, and listened, quietly grunting to acknowledge our attention. When he was done, he looked up, and said—“...sorry for talking about this—why have you come here?” We then proceeded with asking to rent the space and all was quickly agreed. I thanked him for his time. We walked away, and he remained there on that chair, head in his hands, for as long as I could keep him in view. His physical posture reminded me of the chairs used in the Jewish seven-day mourning period.

In the end, Anyibi found a way to pay *culu kwo*. Unlike the transfers of wealth discussed in Chapter 4 like bridewealth or *luk*, *culu kwo* had to be paid in full in a most timely manner. Three years later as I write this, I heard that the killer was found in Northern Uganda, up
near the border with Sudan, near Agoro. True to the Owiro Luke’s vow, the killer was arrested and is awaiting trial.

The next section will discuss this incident in terms of the importance of the responsibilities and relationships reckoned in times of breach in Acoli law ways. I will then examine breach acts from the war and consider how kaka members’ interdependence necessitates the “bracketing away” of most of the experienced violences or breaches during the war years. I will finally detail Pabwoc’s initiative to create a non-profit foundation, and will examine the formulation of their constitution that precisely delineates relatedness manifest in kaka, incorporating transformations and changes from the war years within its tenets. I conclude that this initiative for ribbe kaka, the processes of inter-generational participation that are necessary in its formulation, and the maintenance and translation of kaka responsibilities and relationships into statutory law, is a particularly intriguing example of social repairing in contemporary post-conflict, post-displacement, and increasing land-grabbing contexts.

5.3 Responsibilities and Relationship

The actions of one man had bankrupted, wreaked havoc, generally upheaved, and potentially cursed and haunted the lives of all his sub-clansmen or village co-residents, present and future included. To see this happen marked a profound change in how I understood kaka members’ responsibilities and interdependent relationships in contemporary contexts.
I had learned that *kaka* was important in terms of governance in rural Acoliland due to the prominence of the kin-based communal governance associations (lineages, subs-clan, clans, chiefdom) that prescribed residents’ everyday rights and obligations. I had also learned that *kaka* “shrines” (regarding *abila* and *ayweya*),170 and the rituals performed, were and continue to be important sites for ribbe *kaka* that works towards assuring present and future health and prosperity of clan members (p'Bitek 1971). In information obtained in 2012 from Kal Kwaro Padibe for example, 23 *abila* had been “raised” (*yupu*) in the sub-counties since people had returned to their land, mostly to restore proper relationships between people of the sub-clan, including the ancestors, after the violences experienced during the war years.171

But what I failed to see until the Lumura-Anyibi incident, and what I believe is even more profound to consider in terms of the recent war and displacement, is how collective responsibilities between *kaka* members actualizes their interdependence in matters pertaining to the land, morality, and law. These practicalities ground p'Bitek’s philosophy, and other African relational philosophies (for example, Samkange on Ubuntu 1980) in everyday communal practices and realities. The moral-legal dimension of *kaka* members’ interdependence also informs the pervasive worry that youth were/are “out of tekwaro” as a result of the war and displacement as explored throughout this dissertation. These

170 *Abila* concerns the ancestors. *Ayweya* concerns a sub-clan’s or clan’s “spirit.”
171 When I asked an elder from Nyom Aloo village why this is done, he replied: “We need to do it these days even more than in the past. People just came back and settled here, yet many bad things had taken place in our homes, where are ancestors are. We must gather everyone together and cleanse this place so that our community can get rid of disease and be healthy. You see, everyone must come back here for it, even if they have moved away. It is actually very important for us to be united” (personal communication, August, 2012).
expressions indicate concern with even adults and elders being disengaged from *tekwaro* due to the relational nature of learning (as described in Chapter 1), and while *tekwaro*, indigenous knowledge, encompasses many things, and can denote the ways of the sub-clan and clan–how they do things (*kit me kwo*), including the way they work (*tic Acoli*) and regulate unions (*cuna*), it also denotes specific moral responsibilities for, to, and between clansmen that ideally assures accountability and obligation, and promulgates relative social stability. Ocitti emphasizes these aspects of Acoli indigenous education itself by highlighting that so much attention is given to children’s education (and likewise why youth were “out” of *tekwaro*), because the society is reliant on the interdependence of its members, and on reciprocal kin-relations in all aspects of life (1973). Quite literally, and not only philosophically.

Historically, paying *culu kwo* to the victim’s sub-clan (or clan) was meant as a means for the victim’s *kaka* to propagate despite the loss of life–so that they could use the funds for bridewealth in order to create new life to replace he or she who had been violently taken. Sometimes, in the past, a girl was given directly–so that new life would/will reduce the conflict and that new and intimate relations would be established between the clans (Girling 1960:66). Today, the rate for *culu kwo* is technically set and standardized by *Kal Kwaro* Padibe–although extensive negotiations center around many other “add-ons” or “subtractions” such as funeral costs, compensation for the education (costs) of the victim,

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172 I heard from two separate adults that rich people were partially feared because they are not obligated to their *kaka*, and thus “they do not need to be responsible to their *kaka*.” “If you have money, you can just do whatever you want without following the *kaka’s* rules.”

173 I have not heard of this practice in contemporary Padibe.
the way that the killing took place, and whether property had already been destroyed or
looted by the victim’s sub-clan. The official *culu kwo* in Padibe sub-counties set in cases of
killing or murder, regardless of intention, is: 12 cows, 4 goats and 1 sheep (or the monetary
equivalent)—a massive amount by any reckoning, particularly in subsistence farming
communities whereby all livestock were lost during the war. There is also a *culu kwo*, called
*tabong*, which considers indirect responsibilities for death; for example, “if your cow
knocks and kills someone, or if someone else is driving your motorcycle, and the person
you lent it to knocks and kills someone” (personal communication, 2012). *Tabong* is half
the *culu kwo* (6 cows, 2 goats), and points to other ways in which responsibilities for a
breach is assigned and assumed beyond the person or thing which did the physical act that
resulted in breach.

Corporate, interdependent, collective responsibilities are expected whereby the whole
village/sub-clan of the victim performatively, and publicly, demands that “justice” be done
for the murder of their daughter. This emphasizes the responsibility of the entire sub-clan
for the actions of one of its sons. If you are a son or daughter of Anyibi, genealogically or
otherwise, and live in the village, you are concretely responsible for the actions of your
brothers and sisters (which include your father’s brothers, their wives, their children, your
father’s father’s brothers and so on…) as they affect those outside Anyibi clan. Future
generations may also be held responsible through the phenomena of *cen* (ghostly
vengeance). Breach within the sub-clan, however, is handled differently, as notions of
redress directly correspond to the breached relationship(s).
In addition to responsibilities then, relationships are another key element in understanding breach, and thus repair, in rural Acoliland. The fact that the restoration of social relations, redress, or “justice” is reckoned by the social relationship that was breached by the crime, rather than by the crime itself has long been considered in anthropological literature, for examples when Evans-Pritchard asserts that Nuer law is relative to the structural distance between persons involved in the breach (1965:190), or when Sally F. Moore states that procedure reflects structure (2000:89). This has also been explicitly explored in Acoliland, in Holly Porter’s study of rape (2013). According to her descriptions, in instances of the rape of a woman by a member of her clan, versus a rape of the same woman by a man outside her clan, two very different approaches to “justice” were taken. In the first where what was considered a “breach” of social relations occurred between individuals within the clan, rituals were undertaken to cleanse both parties—the perpetrator was sentenced to buy a goat for the ritual that cleansed the two of incest. In the second incident, the perpetrator was shot and killed. She describes how both these forms of justice were acceptable to the victimized woman, and concludes that “relationship, more than act, shapes notions of appropriate punishment” (2013:15).174

In the case of Lumura and Anyibi, collective responsibilities specifically reference the relationship of the individual to the sub-clan—that responsibilities for redress in breached

174 Holly Porter’s work on rape as “breach” in Acoliland examines rape, and the harm it causes, “predicated on understandings of wrongdoing related to challenges posed to social harmony” (2013:3).
social relations is born by the entire sub-clan and not just the individual who performed the crime, implying that the sub-clan is itself responsible for the actions of its members. Although there are specific punishments for the individual, or limitations of liability (Moore 2000:116)—as meted out by his/her own sub-clan, which also might involve the Ugandan courts as shown here—general responsibilities for the crime, and for the restoring or repair of breached relations between sub-clans is assumed by the entire sub-clan.

These notions of responsibilities and relationships particularly challenge what Maxine Kamari Clarke calls the “fictions” of post-colonial neo-liberal National and International justice today (2009:41), whereby the “spectrality of suffering” of the individual victim demands responsibility by an individual perpetrator. Additionally, collective responsibilities, albeit with limitations set by the kin-based communal governance organizations themselves, makes prominent the ways in which responsibilities and obligations, rather than rights, form a central component of Acoli relatedness rooted in kaka, or indigenous relatedness. As Gordon Christie, Aboriginal legal scholar of Inupiat/Inuvialuit ancestry describes:

Individuals in Aboriginal societies are seen as interwoven into intricate webs of relationships, the self being defined in its relation to others [...] The identity of these

In regard to war crimes and crimes against humanity, jurisdictions claimed by the ICC, Clarke further discusses how these considerations obliterate acknowledgement of the larger socioeconomic and political conditions in which these violations occur (2009).

The importance placed on responsibilities rather than on rights further speaks to the discussion in Chapter 4 on the teaching of child rights in the IDP camps.
individuals (and the various communities they collectively comprise) is provided by the responsibilities they have, which work to weave the web of which they are parts. There are, quite simply, things the individual must do, responsibilities to family, clan and community that must be respected and that must lead to action. Responsibilities act to define a core of the identity of the individual, just as the existence of a society centred around responsibilities defines the identity of Aboriginal communities.

The communal and relational conceptions of responsibilities, here in rural Acoli, show how reciprocal inter-generational kin relations become manifest, reinforced, strengthened, and supported by indigenous dispute resolution and redress practices, by indigenous Acoli law ways.

These conceptualizations of responsibilities and relationships regarding breach should affect how we think about social repair after war and displacement by considering which relations—and thus which responsibilities—are prioritized as important to repair and re-establish by communities. Rather than assuming that relations between individual perpetrators and victims of violence are primary in addressing in post-conflict contexts (if one could even discern between victim and perpetrator), Acoli law ways indicate that re-elaborating interdependent inter-generational kin relations and responsibilities—through engagement with tekwaro—within a family, lineage, sub-clan, and clan are perhaps more
pressing in establishing a functioning social, political, moral, and even legal community.177

As Nuu-chah-nulth law scholar Johnny Mack asserts in considering his own people after centuries of continuing Imperial oppression and subordination in what is now known as Canada, “our disoriented state resulted from the fact that we no longer know our stories. More specifically, we have become disconnected from the perceptual orientation and responsibilities that flowed from these stories” (2011:295).

Kin relations, and inter-generational relations and engagements with stories, or teachings, or tekwaro–i.e. being “in culture”–are thus vital both to indigenous modes of relatedness and the responsibilities and obligations that create social, political, moral, and legal community. These responsibilities and obligations both to and within the kaka in rural Acoli are essential to elaborating and re-elaborating relatedness. They are thus also essential to understanding or conceptualizing what social repairing consists of in the rural Padibe sub-counties after two decades of war and displacement. Prioritizing ribbe kaka thus cultivates further understanding of relatedness, and its relationship to social repair, both historically and in contemporary rural contexts.

Thinking with the interdependence of sub-clan members and collective responsibilities, and its relation to relationships and community, I will next consider the violences

177 For if there are serious problems and unmanageable conflict within your own extended family, the entire wellbeing, health, safety, and prosperity of the sub-clan, present and future, could be at stake (as happened to Anyibi in the recounted story).
committed during the war and displacement years. If responsibility for a breach in social
relations beyond the sub-clan lies with the whole sub-clan, then already complex notions of
victims and perpetrators from the LRA-UPDF war (Baines 2009, 2015) become even more
complicated, helping to understand why Acoli civil society emphasizes the value of
“forgiving”, and individuals and communities’ tendencies to “bracket away” experiences of
violence both perpetrated and experienced during the LRA-UPDF war.

5.4 The “Bracketing Away” of Wartime Violence From Social Relations

I was interviewing one of the elders in Pabwoc one day to gather information about the
sub-clan’s history for the creation of the 65-page colour book on tekwaro Pabwoc (as
described in Chapter 2).\textsuperscript{178} That day we were talking about the current three lineages
within the Pabwoc sub-clan. As re-narrated in Chapter 3, Bwoc actually had only two sons,
Otuna and Ocuga, and there were originally these two lineages within the sub-clan/village
when they settled at their current place. At one point, a family member of Ocuga named
Abonga had a gun that allowed him to catch a lot of game while hunting. Traditionally, meat
is shared among the sub-clan. It is said however, that Abonga did not want to share his
meat with everyone, and so he split from the others and moved just a little bit away with
his family, further west. The area in which his descendants currently reside, (within
Pabwoc still, currently close to what corresponds to Pabwoc-west village) and his
descendants themselves, are sometimes called Oyamo—meaning fresh air. Those that

\textsuperscript{178} The workbook was something that the elders/leaders had asked me to create when I was first
discussing my research project in 2010. The workbook was printed in 2015 with support from the
Trudeau Foundation and delivered in August of 2015. It is attached here as Appendix A.
remained behind, the Otuna and the rest of the Ocuga lineages, and the area they stayed in (roughly corresponding to Pabwoc East village), are sometimes called Ongeng—meaning surprised. In addition to my interest in the village history, in how kin structures and corresponding territory have become transformed into new administrative categories, I was particularly interested in what the elder, a member of the Abonga lineage, said next. He urged me not to delve into this conflict in the tekwaro Pabwoc book, because he didn’t want to create any “bad feelings”, instead saying that the book, and the focus of the book, should be about unity and pride in the sub-clan, ribbe kaka. Although we did eventually reference in a discreet way the incident in the book, and in this dissertation (upon others’ insistence, and with his permission), I was intrigued by his thoughts on the matter. He continued by saying that even in the present, it is best to “forget” some things, especially from the recent war. He pointed out that it is better to forget that some of his clansmen, his brother from another mother for instance, who had been abducted and fought for the LRA, were able to maintain the fruit and other trees on their property, for example, while the rest of people’s orchards had been destroyed. And that the UPDF mostly did the burning, which “raises other questions we also shouldn’t talk about.” When I pressed him on this further, he said that we have to just forget these things because of the circumstances of the war, “or else we will all continue to suffer.”

179 These terms are widely used today, by elders and youth alike. I met a young woman in the market in Kitgum town one day who is originally of Pabwoc, and she asked if I was from Ongeng or Oyamo.

180 Many in Pabwoc assert that the land and trees were burned by the UPDF to “clear” the LRA off the land. Some insist that there was oftentimes a kind of collaboration between the two sides.
This sentiment was echoed by Oyil Francis—the young man from Panyinga, Padibe East, who worked for the youth group and then contributed to this study—who had also been abducted by the LRA for some time during the war. I had asked him whether upon return people would try to hold their abductors accountable, if he wanted to hold his responsible for example. Or if people would seek redress for the violences, including killings. His reply was pensive. He said that it would be impossible to do that, and not worth it, in any case, for what would it bring? So many people were forced to do things that they otherwise would not do during that time, both within the LRA and in the camps. He said that everyone has to live together now, and that many people, himself included, want peace above all else, and that for peace, one has to “just forget these things.”

These “forgettings”, what I understand as purposeful silences or the “bracketing away” of the violence of the war years from people’s social relationships, stem from how people understand “moving on”, and what “moving on” looks like in terms of everyday life and social relations. As I emphasize throughout this dissertation, in post-conflict contexts, how people believe that they are related and what being related does (relatedness), particularly the role of land in relatedness here, provides great insight into the priorities and processes of moving on, of social repairing. And this is largely due to the fact that over 90% of the population survives solely from subsistence farming, from the land itself.

A link between a means of survival, or material resources, to post-conflict social repairing has been made by Shaw (2007) in her descriptions of the “frictions” between Sierra Leone’s
Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and what she calls practices of “the art of forgetting” of much of the population she encountered. She stresses that the purpose of forgetting for the individuals she spoke with was to be able to reconstruct their lives (2007:197), noting that these reconstruction efforts are undermined by the absence of the material resources to do so. Rather than needing material resources to help “forget” in rural Padibe, one must practice a kind of “forgetting” in order to access those resources, the land, in the first place. This understanding of how present material needs of survival intersect with forgetting or silences resonates well with Marita Eastmond and Mannergren Selimovic’s observations that in the aftermath of war in Bosnia Herzegovina “social strategies of silencing may reveal the interdependency between people in many communities and the need to maintain and nurture social relations and reciprocal arrangements, sometimes as a means of survival” (2012:504). Silences are thus understood as a form of communication that at once enables the protection of social relations and affirms a sense of normal everyday life (507). Rather than describe it as a forgetting, I understanding the purposeful silences in Padibe as a “bracketing away” of the relational effects of the violence to re-orient relations themselves to a different center—that of kin-based relatedness, rooted in the land, which is the *kaka*. This is due to the kinds of violences experienced, the prevalence of the violence experienced, and the kinds of relations wherein the violences were experienced, during the years of war and displacement.

The extraordinary circumstances of the war, including the scale of violence and killings, the
fact that most of the violence and killing was done by those who had been abducted and forced to do so, the also inconceivable idea that most of the victim/perpetrators of the violence were children,\textsuperscript{181} that one in five girls and one in three boys have been abducted at some point by the LRA (Annan et al. 2008:iv), that a lot of the forced violence was committed between people often related (due to the widespread reckonings of relations) (Annan and Blattman 2010), that many people who are still missing are not known to be dead or alive, and that the desperation of camp life provoked people to commit and experience other forms of violence, complicate Acoli law ways and their conflict resolution mechanisms involving reckonings of both responsibilities and relationships. There are thus many aspects of the UPDF-LRA war that specifically challenge/transgress conceptual and practical elements involved in kin responsibilities and of dispute resolution practices in Acoli law ways, in addition to challenging normative transitional justice practices (as explored in the introduction).\textsuperscript{182}

These silences, or rather purposeful silences—particularly concerning the assignment of responsibilities to most breaches during wartime—could be understood as an imperative of

\textsuperscript{181} In Acoli, as elsewhere, a child has not yet matured into a fully responsible community member. According to Finnström (2008:225), a child is not quite odoko dano (a moral and social person), although they are bedo dano (still human beings), as Oloya (2013) prolifically explores. They are thus not held fully responsible for their acts.

\textsuperscript{182} On the other hand, other aspects of Acoli law concerning the restoration of health and wellbeing within the sub-clan, including dealing with cen, have been persistently used in contemporary rural contexts (see JRP 2005). In the Padibe sub-counties, for example, each of the major sub-clans has, upon return, yupu abila, performed sacrifice at the ancestral shrine and/or spirit shrine. As explored in section 5.2., they were raised in order to cleanse the area, and its members, of any cen that might have been acquired from the violence perpetrated, experienced, or witnessed during the war and displacement years.
social repairing in contemporary rural contexts. Being morally and legally responsible to and for all your clansmen and clanswomen, as prescribed in Acoli indigenous law, under the extraordinary circumstances of war and displacement simply does not make any logical, conceptual, or practical sense. However, this obligation, and these responsibilities are at the same time fundamental to re-elaborating relatedness, to rebuilding contemporary rural social, political, moral, and legal community. These silences, or what I regard as “bracketing away” most of the crimes of war (particularly in regards to responsibilities for the crimes, so vital to Acoli law) from everyday life and social relations therefore seems to be necessary to moving on after the war and displacement, and to re-establishing relatedness. This is particularly so in regards to ribbe kaka, as kaka continues to regulate and govern the obligations, and rights, of the majority of survivors in rural Acoliland today. I thus understand this “bracketing away” as fundamental to social repairing in rural Padibe today, which indicates how people try to “unfold”, or extract the violence experienced during the war from their social relationships.\textsuperscript{183}

I argue that understanding the relation of an individual to his/her sub-clan, kaka, in situations of breach sheds much light on the importance placed on youth, indeed everyone within the sub-clan, of being “in” tekwaro. Engaging with tekwaro, and participation in one’s social, political, and moral community therefore also creates, and in contemporary contexts, works to re-create legal and moral accountability and responsibilities to and for other members of that community. These responsibilities, reliant on the corporate,

\textsuperscript{183} Whyte and Whyte (2004), in their study of children and relatedness in East Africa, describe something akin to this process as a “situational pragmatics”, whereby people gloss over conflicts in their histories to better support their present relationships.
interdependent nature of the sub-clan, despite the many transformations and fractures from the recent war and displacement, in addition to previously “violently dislocating transregional processes” (Shaw 2002) including Colonialism and the slave trade, on *tekwaro* as well as governance institutions of the sub-clan shows why restoring social relations within the family and extended family (lineage, sub-clan, clan) are paramount to contemporary social repair priorities and practices.\(^{184}\)

Beginning the chapter by describing the wake of an inter sub-clan murder, I explored how the sub-clan as a corporate entity is legally, morally, and economically responsible for the individuals within; sub-clan members are thus interdependent and their mutual responsibilities are vital to community. Examining how memories of crimes from the war are purposefully self-silenced, or I would say, “bracketed away” from everyday social relations, I then emphasized how sub-clan unity, over potentially dis-ordering sub-clan and inter-sub-clan and clan conflicts, is necessitated both by the conceptual and practical aspects of these mutual, and enduring, responsibilities.

\(^{184}\) In rural Padibe, there is a “widening” procedure for dealing with problems, involving the “closest” (genealogically and through marriage) relatives first, and involving the least number of people. Then, if no resolution is possible, procedures spiral outwards to widen the social distance of people and the number of people involved (including Government as well). Engagements with problems, conflicts, crimes, or breach thus spiral out from a homestead, to lineage, to sub-clan, to clan, “chieftdom”, sub-county, district, and national mechanisms, depending on both the nature of the breach, as well as who was first directly involved in the breach. Additionally, sub-county (and ascending district and national level) mechanisms are technically available (they are costly, and in English) at any time to individuals involved who are not satisfied with the procedures involved in kin-based mechanisms. However, as Baba explained, “if something happens, the first line is always with the *kaka*. The LCs are the last resort.” When I questioned Binayo about this, he replied that the police, LC3s, and LC5s even ask the *kaka* to deal with “their own” problems first, and that they should be consulted only as a last resort if communal governance fails.
The corporate nature of the sub-clan, or the interdependence of sub-clan members, and the importance of *ribbe kaka* (united, joined, reconciled) became even clearer as I learned about the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation initiative in 2014. A discussion follows to highlight how initiatives such as creating the sub-clan-based non-profit foundation demands inter-generational participation in learning and interpreting *tekwaro*, indigenous knowledge, to and in response to, local, regional, and global contemporary contexts. I will then examine Pabwoc’s initiative, detailing their constitution, and discuss it as a practice and process of social repairing: of re-engaging individuals to the sub-clan to strengthen participatory relatedness, and to try to secure their ancestral land, the material anchor so essential to relatedness itself in rural Padibe today.

5.5 “Streamlining Indigenous Knowledge” and Land Rights

I had just written a first draft of my chapter abstracts centering social repair as everyday activities that elaborate relatedness and foster kin-based inter-generational participation, when Augustine sent me a very intriguing email.

Augustine attached a document called *Constitution and Bylaws of Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation*, and did not offer any explanation except that I should read it. The document consisted of twenty two pages, written in English, promulgating the kin-based communal governance organization as a non-profit foundation, including descriptions that detail: community
membership, community leadership and elections, membership rights and responsibilities, specific marriage rules, as well as other prohibitions pertaining to peaceable existence.

This section will analyze the constitution that “translates” the responsibilities and relationships manifest in Kaka Pabwoc, the interdependence of its members, from indigenous to statutory law. It examines the creation of the constitution itself as a third boundary process that acts as social repairing in contemporary contexts, one that necessitates inter-generational engagement, participation, negotiation, and debate of tekwaro, explicitly concerning both details and scope of aspects of relatedness manifest in the sub-clan. As opposed to Acoli work and cuna processes discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the creation of the constitution not only acts as a boundary process, as a site that allows cooperation without consensus for members of Pabwoc, or of the Padibe sub-counties, the constitution itself, and becoming a non-profit, was initiated because of it’s potential to act as a mediation tool between Pabwoc and the Ugandan Government, as well as potentially with international corporations as well.

The writing of the constitution is a culmination (at a certain point in time) of processes that evaluate, negotiate, and articulate anew some of the sub-clan’s indigenous knowledge, and its structures of social organization in response to local, regional, and global events and processes, including the recent war and years of displacement, as well as what RRI (2012)
describes as the “global land rush.” I also examine the constitution as a document that 
“translates”, in addition to catalyzes, these kin-based communal governance negotiation 
processes. After Walter Benjamin’s notion of translation (1923), that emphasizes the 
imperfect attempt to carry over meaning from one form to another, acknowledging the new 
itration as a separate entity from the original. I thus see the non-profit foundation and its 
constitution, as a translation and not a substitution of the indigenous kin-based communal 
governance organization (kaka, which technically refers to a heterarchical association, 
including the clan, sub-clan, and lineage). The writing of the constitution for the creation of 
the kin-based non-profit caused inter-generational participation, dialogue, negotiation, and 
interpretation of tekwaro and relatedness–actions that both renegotiate and articulate the 
sub-clan group, a translation, rather than a codification of said organization because of how 
it represents, rather than replaces, a perpetually functional, ever-transforming kaka (sub-
clan) polity.

However, when I first asked Augustine, who was in his early 30s at the time, how the 
Foundation came about, he replied:

We have decided to do this to especially bring together all the members of Pabwoc 
sub-clan, since the population is adding up and there are some who don’t even know

185 As it was told to me, this initiative began with three adult male members of Pabwoc, Baba, 
Oryem Lampton, and Mark Ojwac (who lives in Kampala). They then reached out to Pabwoc’s 
elders, a youth representative (Augustine), and Pabwoc’s “educated elite” (as they said) to discuss. 
They then consulted Lotara, a Pabwoc member who works for UNDP and Loum Samson, whose 
father married a daughter of Bwoc (a nephew of Pabwoc), a lawyer by profession. It was Loum 
Samson who provided the constitution template. Three sub-clan meetings were held to discuss the 
constitution, both the concept and the details. The leaders were elected at a fourth meeting (which I 
attended). It is currently being verified against the constitution of Uganda to be sure it conforms.
each other well. Also the young generations are growing up and they need to be guided on many issues like land, marriages, and much more.

He has since spoken about how tekwaro must be "streamlined", to make it more transparent and readily known and accessible to people, as well as to facilitate people's engagement with it. I also asked Oyil Francis, in his late 20s then, about Pabwoc's constitution, and he replied that his sub-clan was also working on their own constitution:

To me, I see that what has made almost all the clans and sub-clans in Acoliland to start coming together in this way is due to a series of disputes that people are undergoing, and the Uganda Court of Law has no permanent solutions to the problems. This has made people to go back to looking at tekwaro, and it has proved itself to be helping a lot in settling disputes in society.

Francis' understanding of the efficacy of tekwaro in providing “permanent solutions” to disputes, especially in these post-conflict contexts, is key. His comments about the ubiquity of the initiative have been preliminarily verified, and as I understand it, many sub-clans in Acoliland are currently working on their own constitutions.\footnote{186 When I visited Gulu-based scholar Julian Hopwood in 2015, he verified that many of the sub-clans or clans that he was in contact with were presently working on their constitutions.}

When I visited Pabwoc again in 2015, Baba emphasized that a lot of impetus for the creation of their non-profit foundation was actually to be able to secure their communal
customary land rights. As will be noted, in Section 5.2.6.a.iv of the Bobi Pabwoc Foundation’s constitution, the trustee sub-committee is responsible for pursuing free-hold land title for the Foundation.

Although, as previously discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, customary land tenure was officially recognized as one of four legal forms of land tenure in Uganda by the 1995 Constitution and the 1998 Land Act, and was further elaborated on in The Ugandan National Land Policy, drafted in 2013, there have been, and continue to be, many violations of customary land tenure rights within the country. In addition to the traumatic memory of the decracy and absolute impoverishment of the displacement years, realities of the many contemporary state-sanctioned violations of communal customary land rights in Uganda obviously fuels distrust in the government’s respect for real customary land tenure rights.

Between 2006 and 2010, over 22,000 people in Kiboga and Mubende Districts were evicted from approximately 10,000 hectares of customary land, sometimes violently, to make way for a UK-based company’s forest plantations (OXFAM 2011). In Acoliland, ongoing dispute over 40,000 hectares of land that the Ugandan government is attempting to deed to the Madhvani Group, and the persistent, recently deadly, dispute in Apaa parish over new National land demarcations, are ominous reminders of kin-based communal governance associations’ precarious customary rights in the face of Government, or government-
assisted, land grabs.\textsuperscript{187} Reports of oil and other minerals found in Acoliland (prospected during wartime while the entire rural population was constrained in displacement camps) further fuels popular doubt over Government’s assurances that it will respect the security of customary lands. This recent activity and interest in the land is linked to what has been called the “global land rush”, termed bluntly as the “new scramble for Africa” and a “new Colonialism” (RRI 2012). As Otto Mathew, Kitgum’s Land officer, expressed to me in an interview, “some of the population from Southern Uganda is seriously interested in land in the north, and they are manipulating the vulnerability of the population from the recent war” (personal communication, June, 2012).

In the current climate of governmental distrust, and the recent experience of displacement that painfully reiterated the vitality of the land to people’s everyday lives, it is not surprising that Pabwoc, and many other sub-clans in Acoliland, have taken it upon themselves to seek transformation of their land tenure claims by creating kin-based non-profit foundations through which they can try to peacefully secure titled communal rights. As explored in Chapter 3, considering how \textit{ngom kwaro} (ancestral land) grounds relatedness itself, as well as contemporary kin-based communal governance, a sub-clan’s pursuit of secure, more absolute rights to their land is not only understandable, but is itself an act of social repair even as the act translates indigenous knowledge into a non-

\textsuperscript{187} These are just some few examples of land grabs in Uganda. Please see “A Study on Land Grabbing Cases in Uganda” (FoE-Uganda 2012) for more examples.
indigenous structure. It can also be understood as an act of resistance aimed at preserving sub-clan autonomy and indigenous knowledge.

Although there have been concerns from some scholars regarding potential “patrilineal fundamentalism” (Whyte et al. 2012) and the forced imposition of male authority on women and youth as people returned home and patrilineal kin-authority returned (Branch 2013), the constitution, in its ideal and official state at least, and the inter-generational negotiation processes that led to the adoption of the constitution, seem to provide a framework within which different constituencies and members can work to address these concerns. Within the constitution, women—including daughters and nieces of Bwoc, as well as those that married within—have the vote of membership. Additionally, the leader and secretary of the women’s circle have membership on the Foundation’s executive committee. While only youth technically above 18 are granted voting membership rights (in accordance with Uganda’s constitution), those interested from about the age of 15 are welcome to vote in Pabwoc. There is also a youth circle, and their leader and secretary sit on the Foundation’s executive committee.\(^\text{188}\)

The writing of the constitution is thus a significant community-initiated opportunity for ongoing mediation of patriarchal and gerontocratic power, as it provides a new framework for the re-negotiation, contestation, and re-articulation, at least ideally, of these various

\(^{188}\) There is also documentation that *kaka* included these kinds of committees, or what Oloya (2015:262) calls civil society organizations or “interest groups” (of aunties, nephews, youth) before the war, even historically back to the 1800s.
elements (as described above, and as explored in detail in the next section). Yet at the same time, gender and generational relations are structured through the different works that an individual is responsible for in rural Padibe, as well as by predominant patrilocal and patrilineal practices relating to *cuna*, and deeply inscribed practices and ideals of personhood. A close reading of the constitution that follows highlights some of these tensions.

There is also longstanding uneasiness regarding what has been called the “codification” of mostly oral traditions that might fix and distort the fluidity and negotiability of indigenous knowledge (for example, Cruikshank 1994 on the State’s attempt to codify, within a Western framework, concepts embedded in indigenous frames of meaning). Additionally, the historical results of attempts at codification on the African continent, found in customary law in many Colonial countries, has been charged with being the joint creation of African leaders and Colonial officials, rather than an accurate interpretation of indigenous knowledge and conceptual frameworks (Colson 1971, Moore 1986). As Pauline E. Peters, a Sub-Saharan land tenure scholar, states:

> Far from being merely the writing down of a pre-existing oral system, “customary law”, along with “communal” tenure was profoundly shaped—though not determined—by the colonial situation, often serving state, private European, and elite African interests. (Peters 2009:1317)
These histories of translating indigenous knowledge, and the social systems of its organization are interesting to consider in light of Pabwoc’s initiative that may inadvertently transform indigenous knowledge and the conceptual frameworks that ground relatedness, despite the very impetus to protect them. As we will see, the Bobi Pabwoc Foundation’s constitution’s strong emphasis on the intricacies of leadership and the decision making processes themselves, in addition to pursuing what they believe is more secure land rights, rather than on the rules per se, tries in some ways to evade the danger of removing the negotiability and continuously transforming nature of indigenous knowledge.

There is another, perhaps more specific historically informed angle to consider as well. John Jaramogi Oloya describes (2015) the historical development of community governance in Acoliland from 1898 to 2010. As he describes, the “traditional”, heterarchical kaka structures were first transformed with the introduction of Acoli local government in the Colonial era, and subsequently with its redesign by the various post-colonial governments. Significantly, he reminds us that the brotherhood ethos of Acoli community governance, of the kaka structures, has historically lent itself to the co-existing (not always peacefully) of kaka with other “foreign” governance structures. He argues that this perseverance of kaka ideology and governance within the post-colonial State posits Acoliland as a “limited statehood”, manifesting hybridized political orders (81) where

189 Oloya describes this ethos as a form of facultative mutualisms—whereby two units come together for mutual benefit, while still maintaining enough independence to survive on their own.
plural legal frameworks are consistently practiced (87). During the LRA-UPDF war, donors and their funded Civil Society Organizations (CVOs) and networks of NGOs led de-facto governance in the IDP camps (Oloya 2015:145, Dolan 2009), over both kin-based communal governance organizations and the National Government. And although the sheer amount of NGO involvement and their implications in peoples’ everyday lives multiplied exponentially with a move to the IDP camps, NGO involvement beginning around the 1980s already had impacts on kin-based communal governance organizations (Oloya 2015:289).

Using Oloya’s analytical lens then, the Bobi Pabwoc Foundation can be seen as a further instrumentalization of the kaka ideology as they ally with the contemporary international CSO and NGO non-profit governance systems. What impact these allying actions may have on kaka itself, brings to mind, for example, what Johnny Mack questions in relation to his own people’s treaty negotiations with the Canadian Government: is participation in the treaty framework itself liberalizing his people’s modes of political and social order? (2011). He calls this engagement in pursuit of rights a kind of participatory subordination—the “bait and switch” of post-colonial liberalism. Regarding the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation, will the constitution in itself then, even with considerations of it as a translation, rather than a codification, necessarily transform and subordinate Acoli kin-based communal governance?

190 Oloya’s thesis precisely concerns how this co-existence has dovetailed with violence, as a form of power struggle, within the post-colonial state. However it will be interesting to see, in this case, if a hybridized political order with a non-profit might produce less violence and friction with the State.
Pabwoc will see how the Foundation acts in the coming years to both assure and delineate their rights and responsibilities, promote *ribbe kaka*, and protect their land.\(^{191}\) Presently, however, the creation of the Foundation and the writing of the constitution, although appropriating a western, legal, capitalist framework, is nonetheless a powerful boundary process that generates inter-generational participation and engagement with *tekwaro*, re-elaborating notions of relatedness, particularly the responsibilities and relationships of the sub-clan. I thus understand the creation of the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation as an act of social repairing in the present that strategically instrumentalizes indigenous knowledge to foster *ribbe kaka* (clan, sub-clan, lineage unity, togetherness, joining) and protect communal, customary land rights. The next section will examine the constitution text itself to elaborate on the ways that its creation works as a boundary process—the way it re-gathers community, provokes engagement with *tekwaro*, and re-elaborates relatedness—thereby performing social repair.

### 5.6 The Constitution of the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation

The preamble of the Constitution reads as follows:

> We, the members of Bobi Pabwoc Foundation here and elsewhere, feeling the necessity of a unified effort to enhance mutual understanding, to encourage and to glorify the Bobi Pabwoc Foundation old and young generations, by their prudent participation in every activities, fruitful endeavors as well as legal purposes for the

\(^{191}\) In Canada and the USA for example, indigenous corporations and non-profits have had a varied amount of success in assuring the actual rights of its members (see Ethnicity Inc. by the Comaroffs (2009) for information on corporations, and Ouellet (2016), on First Nations non-profit endeavours in Canada).
welfare and progress in close touch with one another, do hereby promulgate and enact this constitution and by-laws.

The first substantive section of the constitution is entitled, “the objectives and purposes of the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation.” Emphasizing familial unity, this section details the promotion of the sub-clan’s collective interests. Because of the relevance of this specific section to my assertions of ribbe kaka, and of repairing, I paste the section in its entirety below:

3.1-To promote the interests and general welfare of the community members of Pabwoc Foundation and its descendants, with reference to cultural norms and values, discipline, leaderships, land use, education, health, and all other development related issues.
3.2-To develop familial unity and undertake plans and programs aimed for the improvement of the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual well being of the members.
3.3-For the perpetuation of genealogy, traditions, customs, history, literature, worship, and music of Bobi Pabwoc Foundation.
3.4-To compile and maintain the roll of all members Bobi Pabwoc Foundation, and to disseminate information about the Foundation to its members and others who shall be interested.
3.5-To assist in the identification and selection of the chiefs, leaders, and titles of Bobi Pabwoc Foundation.

3.6-To work, as one family in promoting socio-economic betterment, reunions, and gatherings of the members wherever and whenever the Foundation deems prudent.

3.7-To offer voluntary services to its members during unprecedented disasters and other form of calamities, either natural or man-made.

3.8-To represent the members and defend their interests before the proper agencies, and to take joint or lawful concerted actions for the redress of grievances, and/or to report human rights violations.

3.9-To uphold the Foundation’s objectives by means of initiation fees, dues, and funds derived from the member's contributions, donations, and similar assistance from any lawful source within and outside Bobi Pabwoc Foundation.

3.10-To form and empower committees that shall support our mission and accomplish our objectives.

3.11-To sanction an officially registered community for advocacy of rights, development, charity works, and entrepreneurship.

3.12-To establish Bobi Pabwoc Foundation headquarter, centres, and offices where members assemble for social, educational, developmental, recreational, and other lawful purposes.

The next section, four, delineates membership, first stating that membership is recognized by genealogy and accreditation, without regard to sex, age, religion, or presence of
handicap. It goes on to detail that all descendants of Bwoc shall be counted as members; including those by marriage, and that one becomes a voting member at 18 years. Under 18 years, one is a Junior (non voting) Member. There are also allowances for Associate and Honourary Members, and for membership through adoption, to be voted on at the general meetings. These clauses regarding non-genealogically related members are significant as it formalizes processes that extend the long-standing fluid and negotiable tradition of the incorporation of friends and guests into the clan (Girling 1960, Hopwood 2015).

The technical incorporation of daughters, as well as daughters’ sons and daughters, as members, formalizes existing informal practices regarding rights and obligations through one’s matrilineal line that had hitherto made the matrilineal village a place of historical refuge (Hopwood 2015:403, Girling 1960:39-40, Finnström 2008:34). As discussed in Chapter 4, a decline in cuna during and since the war and camp years have increased the amount of young women and their children in need of long-term or perpetual land rights and membership in their natal villages. In Pabwoc East in 2012, for example, about 1/3 of homesteads included daughters of Pabwoc, or daughters’ children, or daughters and their children. This formal inclusion can be understood as a response to this need, and is interesting because it documents how practices impacted by the war, specifically the relationships and responsibilities impacted by the war (increased daughters, and children of daughters, needing to live in the village) become incorporated in kin governance.192

192 According to a Bourdieu-ian framework, it shows how habitus (resulting from practice) from the war years becomes incorporated into the doxa (accepted social philosophy).
The extremely lengthy section five details leadership, the officers of the Foundation and their attending roles. Although some new roles are specified, the constitution mostly maintains the same indigenous social organization as pertains to the, sub-clans, and lineages; especially that all matters that cannot be settled well within the lineages will be referred to the sub-clan chief. This mirrors the ascending mechanisms of Acoli indigenous dispute resolution, from the household, to the lineage, to the sub-clan, to the chiefdom or clan. This indigenous dispute mechanism chain also intersects with Government structures depending on the nature of the conflict, as previously described.

Stipulations regarding the leader of Pabwoc, “Ladit Kaka” follow. He or she must be a member of Bobi-Pabwoc foundation by genealogy and/or birth, must be between 50 and 80 years old, must be an exemplary and respectable person, and will have a ten-year renewable term. Stipulations regarding the leader of Pabwoc, “Ladit Kaka” follow. He or she must be a member of Bobi-Pabwoc foundation by genealogy and/or birth, must be between 50 and 80 years old, must be an exemplary and respectable person, and will have a ten-year renewable term.¹⁹³ S/he is “in charge of tradition, culture, norms, relationship, marriages, discipline, practices and worship/beliefs of this community”, and “shall preside over matters pertaining to genealogy, traditions, practices, relationships, marriages, death, and the creation of new lineage (Ot) status.”

¹⁹³ No mention of female or male is found here, however, it would be extremely unlikely—at least in the present—that the sub-clan chief would be a female. First, it is indicated that Ladit Kaka must be a member by birth (and not through marriage). And although not stated here, an “exemplary” person in Pabwoc indicates someone, who in addition to being honest, liked etc., is in a (or several) long-term heterosexual marriage(s), with children. Most daughters of Bwoc who reside in Pabwoc are, for several reasons, divorced, or were never married, which would technically disqualify them from the position. This is an example of the tensions in gender norms manifest in these frameworks that I referred to earlier in the chapter.
The Land Chief, “Rwot Kweri”, must be elected from the members of the foundation, be between 40 and 70 years old, and is traditionally in charge of land management. S/he will preside on a land committee comprised of nine members. The lineage chiefs’ “wonkom me ot” shall be elected from among the members of the lineage, and will preside in the meeting of the lineage council, comprising the vice lineage chief, secretary, treasurer, information secretary, women leader, and youth leader. The lineage chief, women, and youth leaders from each of the lineages are also members of Bobi Pabwoc Foundation’s Executive Council. Significantly, all members of the Foundation above 75 years (elders) are ex-officio members of the Executive Council as well. This further honours the traditionally revered role of elders. In addition, there are several sub-committees, including: trustees, education, health, planning and development, women’s circle, and youth circle. Of note is that the trustees committee shall “work as a body representing Bobi Pabwoc Foundation in acquiring a Free-hold Land Title in accordance to section 15-19 of the Land Act 1998.”

Sections six, seven, eight, nine, and ten describe voting procedures, meetings, finances, an official seal, and conflicts of interest, respectively. Section eleven entails prohibitions, including gambling, lotteries, and most notably, that the Foundation’s funds may not be used to pay fines of members who have been convicted in the court of Uganda. Section twelve is concerned with amendments, and thirteen with the “suspension, expulsion, and termination of membership.” Expulsion requires a 2/3 vote of all members, as does dissolution of the Foundation as stipulated in section fourteen.
The final section, fifteen, details the important and intricate Foundation bylaws. Included in the bylaws is the relationship of Bobi Pabwoc Foundation members and other members of the Bobi Clan; including the genealogy outlined in Chapter 3, and that the five sub-clans of Bobi in Padibe sub-counties are “held together through”: “sharing during cultural functions/rites, sharing during disturbances, disputes, restitutions, and other difficult moments, and not allowing marriages to take place within their clan members.” Rights are outlined next, including members’ equal rights to land and natural vegetation. Members’ equal obligations are then outlined, including: i) peace and tranquility, ii) community, programs, works, and functions, iii) meeting attendance, iv) marriage prohibition between sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, nephews and female members by marriage (while husbands are still alive) of Pabwoc, v) not committing adultery, vi) fulfillment of traditional marriage within the first five years of staying together, and finally, vii) health and sanitation. Failure to abide by these by-laws will result in possible fines, facing the court of Uganda, temporary isolation, lashes (regarding peace and tranquility and incest), expulsion, and/or rescindment of office.

Of note amongst the various marriage prescriptions—that mostly define incest—is that an ideal maximum time of five years should elapse between the first time a man and woman “stay together” until the “fulfillment of traditional marriage.” This in itself is an incredibly high standard to set, and reflects a large degree of attention to the so-called “lost” cuna

194 I note that there is no mention of polygamy or monogamy. In 2012, approximately one in three homesteads contained polygamous marriage arrangements.
process and inter-generational disengagement that it has engendered, as explored in Chapter 4. This institutional support, at least ideally, for the fulfillment of traditional marriage rites in a short time frame suggests the priority placed on this process, and it will be interesting to see if and how it actually affects cuna processes in time.

I was present at the sub-clan meeting in 2015 when the constitution was adopted and the elections for sub-clan leader, rwot kweri, women’s leader, youth leader, and other offices took place. Although I speak of the writing of the constitution as an interesting opportunity that engaged people in the work of social repairing, the process itself (the adoption of the constitution and acceptance of the idea of a non-profit Foundation), like other processes of social repair, was not necessarily smooth or conflict-free by any means. There were a few men in the community who did not think that Pabwoc East and West should join as a Foundation (affiliations that remain tense since the Abonga split from Ocuga as discussed earlier in this chapter), and that each should pursue their own land claims. Emergency meetings were held apparently, and Rwot Bobi along with his executives, who reside near Gulu (about a half-day by public transit), came to speak to all of Pabwoc to remind them of their genealogical links. At the final meeting, which I attended, the master of ceremonies or chairperson was in fact someone from another sub-clan of Bobi, from neighbouring Nyom Aloo. I was told that this was done to reduce conflict within Pabwoc. The chairperson reminded the sizeable crowd at the beginning that Bwoc was the first son of Bobi, so they must lead by example with sub-clan unity and organization. He also threatened that if Pabwoc could not unite and make peace within itself, if they could not decide on one sub-
clan leader (the former leader died in May 2014), that Bobi would instead impose someone else as leader on them all! He then called upon everyone who had not attended the previous meeting to stand at the front of the crowd. One by one, he made people divulge why they had not attended, and emphasized the importance of participation in these processes.

As described throughout this thesis, “being in” or learning tekwaro is a relational, spatial, and participatory process, and involves activating inter-generational relationships, and applying and making indigenous knowledge meaningful to one’s contemporary contexts. The processes involved in the articulation and adoption of the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation’s constitution provides one such multi-layered site for these practices.

The emergence of the Bobi-Pabwoc Foundation, a kin-based communal governance organization translated into the structure of a non-profit foundation, is thus in many ways not surprising considering the urgency in re-establishing sub-clan unity in post-conflict and post-displacement contexts. As Sharika Thiranagama states in her work with communities displaced by violence in Sri Lanka, “displacement brings the desire to fix that which becomes revealed in crisis to be fluid and yet deeply potent” (2007:133). And although this non-profit initiative offers a kind of material proof that ribbe kaka is vital in these post-conflict rural contexts, its creation also attests to the community’s more nuanced need to re-articulate indigenous knowledge, both to adapt and make relevant the knowledge and institutions of the sub-clan, and to “streamline”, communicate, negotiate, and discuss them
by multiple generations that grew up “out of” tekwaro, or grew “away from” tekwaro so to speak, within the constraints of the camp, without the naturalized structural organization of their village’s ancestral land (as explored in Chapter 3). To re-elaborate and “fix” a mode of relatedness not defined by the violences experienced. A relatedness that implies interdependence and responsibilities, as well as stewardship of the land on which it is based, which was recently shown by displacement and war to be, in fact, mutable.

5.7 Conclusion

I began the chapter by recounting an incident of murder in the Padibe sub-counties to explore the persisting corporate nature of the sub-clan, or the interdependence of individuals’ relationships and their responsibilities within and to the sub-clan in contemporary rural Acoliland. Demonstrating how the sub-clan itself is called upon to act/function as a collective legal and moral, in addition to political entity, in an extreme situation such as this, I considered these myriad, indivisible roles that kaka plays in contemporary rural contexts.

This allows for deeper, more nuanced and weighty understanding of the urgency to re-negotiate inter-generational familial and sub-clan relations, and to re-articulate tekwaro, part of re-engaging with an indigenous legal order (Napoleon 2007). Attending to the interdependent relationships and responsibilities of sub-clan members also sheds light on why most crimes from the recent war have been “bracketed away” from everyday life and relationships through purposeful silences. A description and discussion of the Bobi-Pabwoc
Foundation then showed how sub-clan members are seeking to further legitimize, invoke,
and make applicable the responsibilities and relationships implied in kaka, to
contemporary contexts, and that this should be understood as a practice of social repair in
contemporary post-war, post-displacement, and current global land grabbing contexts.

As described throughout this thesis, learning tekwaro is a relational process, and involves
inter-generational interactions, and negotiating, applying, and making one's indigenous
knowledge meaningful and useful to one's contemporary contexts, thereby participating in
the creation and re-creation of social, political, and moral community. The pursuit of ribbe
kaka through the creation of the Foundation demonstrates the importance of kaka, and
their rights to unimpeded stewardship of their land, to Acoli notions of relatedness in these
post-conflict, increasingly land-precarious contexts. Kaka Pabwoc's Foundation strategy is
thus also a boundary process provoked by a return to the land that re-elaborates
participatory relatedness. Like tic Acoli and cuna before, this posits the creation of the
constitution, and kaka ribbe generally, as important sites of social repairing in
contemporary rural Acoliland.
Chapter 6: Re-membering After War and Displacement

6.1 Introduction–Re-membering

Awat Lara from Quebec, you know, this war, this war has really dis-membered us. Brother is now in conflict with brother over land! Men do no take responsibility for their own children! Daughters do not help or listen to their own mothers! Elders drink so much alcohol from the trauma, it dilutes their experience! They may have grey hair but they are not elders! People do not see home as home should be! You know, the Acoli are very notoriously related....unity is strength here!

Ojara John Okello, radio personality, high school teacher, Kitgum town resident, and my Acoli tutor, spoke these words to me one very hot afternoon in Pabwoc in March of 2012. The winds were treacherous those days, and little twisters would tear through the parched homestead and we would have to seek refuge in my house until they passed. He was usually a passionate, boisterous speaker, and today was no exception. The speech I quoted above was just part of a preamble to the day’s simple lesson on the words for different relatives in Acoli.

I had not remembered this particular conversation until I recently re-read my field notes in preparation for writing this conclusion. However, I had been mulling over the concept of re-membering for some time. Barbara Myerhoff describes the relational acts of storytelling as re-membering, which calls special attention to the re-gathering or re-aggregation of
membership and members that occurs through the storytelling process (Myerhoff 1982, p.111). Jennifer Cole describes how colonial power, through reorganization and transformation, re-membered Betsimisaraka in Madagascar, and how in turn, the Betsimisaraka remember the experiences and transformations of colonialism (2001:21). Invigorated by the concept, I was inspired to consider everyday acts of social repair in rural Padibe in the same way. In the terms of this thesis, I understand re-membering as a re-making or re-creation of relatedness, of re-elaborating how people are related, and of what being related actually does, in reaction to, and in resistance of, the powerful relational impacts of violence from the war and displacement years.

“This war has really dis-membered us” (Ojara John Okello).

“Home is dead” (Title and excerpt from a song composed by Margurut, Patongo IDP camp).

I began this dissertation by quoting a local song that was composed during the war that lamented the death of home. Gang otoo. I have chosen, however, to emphasize how home becomes alive again. What practices act like the first rains after a long dry season that sprouts life at the homestead? What interactions serve to repair the social, or roco wat (restore relations), that were so affected by the years of violence and displacement? And what conceptualizations of the social are mobilized in these processes?
My research questions emerged from pervasive inter-generational angst regarding *tekwaro*, indigenous knowledge, in the immediate post-conflict years. As described, youth, adults and elders were concerned with youth’s disengagement from *tekwaro*, both by circumstance, and sometimes by continued choice. I have dedicated this project to discovering what the angst and concern means to people’s everyday lives and experiences of relatedness, and how the idiom of *tekwaro* itself addresses a range of post-conflict and post-displacement issues concerned with social repair, with re-membering, with making home alive again.

There is an Acoli proverb “*yito pe duny nono*”; “smoke does not rise for nothing.” I was interested in understanding both the smoke and the fire as people expressed their post-war concerns through expressions regarding *tekwaro*. My questions at the outset concerned inter-generational knowledge transmissions, a) how and why *tekwaro* was referenced and mobilized in dealing with the effects of the recent conflict? and b) how were inter-generational knowledge transmissions transformed during war and displacement, and how have those transformations shaped people’s everyday relational practices–practices that caused concern with *tekwaro*?

I have learned that generally, in addition to experiences of violence, displacement from people’s home lands changed many of their everyday practices (food procurement, commensality, recreation etc.). These changed practices changed the opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transmissions, or engagements with *tekwaro*. These changed
opportunities affected how people related to each other, whom people related with, and what being related meant, relatedness in displacement contexts. A return home, and a return to a reliance on the land for subsistence, and to the customary land tenure that includes *kaka*’s common stewardship of the land, had the power to re-gather people together, to re-member them, despite the fracturing effects of years of displacement and experienced violence.

To arrive at these conclusions, I drew on my experiences in Northern Uganda over the past decade, particularly my visits to IDP camps throughout the north and my longer-term engagements in Padibe. Methodologically, in 2012, I lived in the rural village of Pabwoc, and took part in quotidian village life, learning *kit me kwo* (ways of life) and *tic Acoli* (Acoli work), paying particular attention to practices that engaged different generations, and learning myself the responsibilities and accountabilities of “obligation.” I also completed a full village survey, engaging residents in conversations about their experiences of the war and displacement years, as well as generally discussing how they understood *tekwaro*. Interviewing elders within the village so that I could create a workbook on *tekwaro Pabwoc*, as requested of me by *Ladit Kaka* (sub-clan leader) and the elders, complemented these activities, and along with “looking for the ancestors” (the documentation of family trees by lineage), provided valuable insight into the spatial dimension of relationality embodied in the village of Pabwoc (and other villages in Padibe sub-counties) which directly corresponded to *kaka* (in this case the sub-clan of Pabwoc). My involvement with a youth group’s “cultural revival” program throughout the Padibe sub-counties provided a
expanded forum of discussion regarding tekwaro and inter-generational practices that complemented and provided comparison to my activities with the sons and daughters of Bwoc.

Throughout this dissertation, I have focused on inter-generational interactions provoked by a return to the land that work to re-member family and community. These interactions engage different generations, through active learning of their indigenous knowledge, tekwaro, in participating in their own indigenous communities, and in conceiving, articulating, and performing community itself. Practicing relatedness. Although many aspects of relatedness in rural Padibe can be said to conform to classic patrilineal social organization, genealogy—though a cornerstone of relatedness—is often not in itself enough. As I have described, the relatedness reliant on biology is only acknowledged through action–seen in its extreme form in how interactions around luk and bridewealth legitimize children (and not biology in and of itself), and gathers or aggregates people to their communities. Braiding together everyday work, with courtship practices, with the writing of a kaka constitution, weaves together a range of frameworks for practices that I understand to be constitutive of social repair, of re-membering in contemporary post-conflict contexts because of the ways that they re-elaborate relatedness. Relatedness in Acoli then, is rooted in the land and exists in and through practice.

I have tried to address here the fire from which the smoke of concerns for tekwaro arose, and discuss why such worry coalesced around it. I will first address my main contributions
to the field of social repair and relatedness, and consider how these insights might impact anthropological studies of lives in and after war. The limitations of this particular study undertaken by a particular researcher at a particular place at a particular time will then be considered, as I suggest future research possibilities that would continue to highlight indigenous community initiatives concerned with communal land rights protection in post-conflict and conflict contexts. I finally reflect on how the project has changed my conceptions of research, and myself as a researcher.

6.2 Contributions

Studies of social repair, or how individuals and communities “move on” after war, have been important in challenging hegemonic policies and practices of transitional justice by emphasizing victims’ agency and practices that create and re-create sociality and personhood (Das 2007, Jackson 2005, Nordstrom 1996, Riaño-Alcalá 2006, N.d., Shaw 2007, Theidon 2012). Moving away from state-centered practices, and using a local, situated lens to discern what culturally and historically specific practices people use to “move on”, these studies have been vital to recognize how people rebuild their life worlds during and after war within intimate, relational, and community spheres of action. Spirit possession in Mozambique (Igreja et al. 2008), acting in a Pentecostal play in Sierra Leone (Shaw 2007), dealing with arrepentidos (repenters) in Peru (Theidon 2012), and returning to one’s homelands every year in Colombia (Riaño-Alcalá 2015) are just a few examples of much important work in the field, and all explore how individuals and communities both re-create and perform different notions of the social and the relational to practice social
repair. I have tried to describe situated practices that re-constitute and re-create sociality in rural Padibe by explicitly examining local idioms of relatedness. I do so by orienting myself to Janet Carsten’s term “relatedness”, which as she describes “sidesteps a biological/social dichotomy and the particular baggage that “kinship” carries as an analytic term” (2013:249). Applying kinship or relatedness theory, or how people reckon they are related and what being related does locally, both intimately and communally, has allowed for the emergence of the insight that land, and land tenure is particularly important to relatedness in Acoli, and thus to any understanding of social repair. Using the relatedness lens allows for a consideration of a range of practices that do not specifically reference the violence or conflict events themselves, and has called for acknowledgement of how social repair in rural Padibe largely concerns the actual lived refusal, or resistance, of violence’s capacities to delineate and re-organize social relations. And while studies of social repair to date have implicitly noted this refusal–how repenters in Peru, spirit mediums in Mozambique, a Wayuu community in Colombia, as examples, all call upon different modes of relationality than those created through their experiences of violence–there has not been explicit recognition of the ways in which repair itself can concern resistance of the seeping, inscribing, relational effects of violence.

My questions and what I learned about how people “move on” after war and displacement have repeatedly emerged from and have re-rooted themselves in local concepts of tekwaro and ngom, gang, or paco (land, home, village). As explored throughout the dissertation, the land is the main idiom of relatedness in rural Acoli. A return to the land itself, and to the
system of tenure, provoked interactions that engaged people in *tekwaro* and that served to re-elaborate relatedness, and thus repair social relations. The concepts and the inter-generational practices I describe that engage people in *tekwaro* (indigenous knowledge) thus have little to do with directly addressing forms of physical violence resulting from the years of war and displacement. There are no direct mentions of how Acoli work repairs relationships between formerly abducted youth and their non-abducted, non-militarized *kaka* members.195 Likewise, I have not recounted how it is that formerly abducted youth engage in *cuna* (courtship practices) and become better incorporated or accepted in their own indigenous communities. Nor have I detailed any *kaka* constitution by-laws that explicitly deal with war widows, former abductees, or orphans that resulted from the war. Yet it is also true that in each of the frameworks, or boundary processes, that I describe as important sites of social repair (Acoli work, courtship practices, and the *kaka* constitution) these reconciliatory practices also do occur.

For example, through our work in 2006-2008 I came to know Beatrice's life history and that she was abducted by the LRA. She remained with them for over a year before she successfully escaped, and she was forced to commit, and also received, terrible acts of violence. Beatrice practices *tic Acoli* and is involved in the *cuna* process, and though these practices are not specifically geared towards “reintegration” of “formerly abducted children” like herself, these are the practices that the majority of formerly abducted youth

195 As Theidon does when she explores the fact that *arrepentidos* who sought refuge in a village were given lands to work, and how that work re-made them as human, and built trust and communality (2012).
do engage in that actually serves to reintegrate them to their rural communities. Just as these practices serve to re-elaborate relatedness, to re-member non-abducted forcibly displaced youth and community members as well.

Every lineage, sub-clan, and clan incorporates people who were abducted by the LRA, killed by the LRA, still missing after LRA abduction; and people who were forcibly displaced, whose belongings were raided by the UPDF, and who suffered UPDF intimidation and violence. Kilama, Beatrice’s husband, had also been abducted by the LRA. Oyil Francis, who collected the local songs and information about abila for this study, was also abducted for some time by the LRA. Three of the seven elders in Pabwoc, including Binayo, were also abducted for variable amounts of time. Binayo’s half-brother was abducted and remained with the LRA for many years. One of Uncle Pacoto’s children died from disease in the IDP camp, and two were abducted by the LRA and reported dead in Sudan. Two of the sons of Bwoc who were forced to join the LDUs eventually joined the UPDF. Baba’s sister was killed by the LRA. All to say that the people I’ve met over the years and written about in this dissertation have all experienced various amounts and kinds of violence, as forced perpetrators, receivers, or both.

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196 I say majority to acknowledge that there are studies that explore how some formerly abducted persons have sought alternatives to a return “home” to the rural village, such as migration to a city or town center, either by choice or because of necessity (they were not accepted in their villages, or feared being there) (see Baines 2015, Branch 2013, Whyte et al. 2012, 2014, for examples). Because my focus has been on social repair in the rural village, all the formerly abducted people that I met were living in either their maternal or paternal villages.
I have thus found in rural Padibe that social repair consists of making home living again, a return to the everyday, and re-engagement with tekwaro that provokes participation in one’s social, political, moral, and legal community; regardless of an individual’s particular experiences of violence during the war and displacement years. Repair here is thus resistance of the defining, fragmenting power of violence on individuals and social relations themselves, to highlight instead mutuality, commonality, and obligation in kin terms: to “move on” and make home living again.

My emphasis on practices that serve to repair social relationships between generations and members of a sub-clan can be partially attributed to my following the smoke of the fire that was pervasive inter-generational angst around tekwaro, but I believe that this concern was so pervasive in part because of the reality that the distinction between perpetrator and victim were particularly blurred in this war (Baines 2009, 2015, Mawson 2004). The fact that the Acoli community was one of the first victim populations globally to lobby their government for blanket amnesty for former “rebels”, belies the complications in distinguishing between victim and perpetrator and not only on so-called “traditional” Acoli justice mechanisms that incorporate an ethos of forgiveness (Baines 2007:101). Between 20 to 30% of youth had been abducted at some point by the LRA (Annan et al. 2008) and were victims of extreme physical violence, and made to be perpetrators of violence. The entire rural population was forced into IDP camps where morality norms were transgressed by many aspects of the constrained space of social life. Every extended family, lineage and sub-clan therefore had many people (like in Pabwoc) who experienced violence,
as victims, perpetrators, or both. As people returned home after displacement, their experiences of violence had to be “bracketed away” (as discussed in Chapter 5) from everyday life and relationships so that community could re-elaborate relatedness not subordinate to their experiences of the violence, and rebuild a sustainable way of life so that indigenous governance and an indigenous legal order (Napoleon 2007) could be re-articulated and re-enacted. The “bracketing away” of the violence attempts to re-orient social relations, and relatedness, towards a different center than the violence-to home, or the land itself. I learned that the ways in which home acts as an orienting coordinate for social repair is how a return to people’s home lands provokes interactions that spur people to access, negotiate and learn tekwaro, and how engagement with tekwaro engenders participation in people’s social, political, moral, and legal communities.

Although I do not document and describe in-depth the violences both experienced and perpetrated during the war, the violence from the war is ever-present. But as people themselves work to build their lives anew, an emphasis on responsibilities, on unity, and on interdependence and living together again grounded in their return to their home lands has provided the impetus and ethos for “moving on” in these contexts. Accessing, negotiating, and applying indigenous knowledge to “unite” by re-elaborating relatedness is utilizing the same body of knowledge that has historically guided their community through past periods of violence and disruption; including everyday breach, inter-clan conflicts, encounters with British Colonial officials, churches, Arab traders, as well as cataclysmic droughts and disease.
Tekwaro is about reconciling people in the paco (home, village, homestead). Unity is the most important aspect of tekwaro pa Acoli. If people fight, no matter who they are, tekwaro would find every way to bring them back together. Because, in the end, we all must live together. (35 year old man, Pabwoc)

I have centered the practices that re-engage individuals and families (after the dis-engaging power of violence) within their own indigenous social, political, moral, and legal communities. Additionally, the very ordinary re-attachment to community through participation, or participatory acts of kinship engendered by a return to the land, is what empowers an ever-transforming kaka polity to then govern and respond to the needs and transformations of contemporary life. As p'Bitek writes in his first novel Lak Tar (White Teeth): “kinship is not something sung about, not something written in newspapers, not something paid lip-service to. Kinship is seen in action” (p'Bitek 1989:35).

Attending to the actions of kinship, the practices of elaborating and re-elaborating relatedness that unite people as a community, despite the multiple, ongoing, and historical practices that can serve to divide (including abductions and violence from the war years, but even before from Colonialism, the Slave trade and droughts), acknowledges the “local” as both a historic and continuous source of knowledge and capacity (Baines 2010:430) as well as repair, and as a community that itself mediates the multiple local, national, and international events and structures that affect everyday life in rural Acoliland.
I thus assert that land, and the systems of land tenure—or human-land relations generally—are vital to understanding localized, indigenous practices of social repair. This acknowledgement suggests that conceptually, the study of “social repair” has much to gain by, as social repair practices in rural Padibe strive for, being freed from the often totalizing referential power of the recent violence experienced. A reorientation to other anchoring points, in this case, to home and what makes home living again, to the land, to respect, and to the sub-clan provides situated understanding of how individuals and communities “move on” with their lives. And how moving on itself concerns the re-elaboration of relatedness untethered to the relational destruction imparted by violence experienced during the years of conflict and displacement. It also then highlights how relatedness itself concerns a series of processes created and re-created by individuals and communities to navigate ever-transforming historico-political realities, including conflict, violence, and upheaval, that serve to re-member communities through time.

Engagement with tekwaro, and through it the elaboration and re-elaboration of indigenous relatedness, is a mechanism in and of itself for dealing with conflict, for bringing people back in, for re-membering. Koreen Reece (N.d.) emphasizes that conflict and crisis, and managing conflict and crisis, is a feature of kinship that makes extended families “remarkably resilient” in the face of major contemporary social welfare, and public health, crises in Botswana. In rural Padibe, kaka seem to be “remarkably resilient” in regards to exterior crisis and conflict, most recently including the LRA-Government war. And further, historically, as explored in Chapter 3, kaka (the heterarchical governance alliances between
kin-groups) themselves became more pronounced by crisis and conflict, specifically in response to drought, the slave trade, and Colonialism. As Oloya states, *kaka* formations were attempts by Acoli society to address these crises and conflicts (2015: 146-7). Girling, who was working towards the end of Colonial rule in Acoliland, himself noted that amongst the Acoli there was an “apparent absorption in the past...this interest in history was a part of a widespread discussion accompanying the changes and was also an attempt to influence the course of events by appealing to the precedents of the past” (1960:5).

I thus understand that engaging with *tekwaro*, with a body of indigenous knowledge originating in “the past”, and elaborating and re-elaborating relatedness itself, is a form of social repairing, and that relatedness (or kinship), likewise largely concerns how a community of individuals deals with and manages different kinds of conflicts, both internal and external, through time.

6.3 Future Research

The number of people in our world who are displaced from contemporary conflict and violence continues to grow. At the end of 2014, an estimated 38.2 million people were displaced from their land within their own countries worldwide, and 19.5 million were forced to cross an international border (UNHCR 2015). Although the causes of refugee and internal displacement are multiple and cumulative, the vast majority of new and prolonged displacement from people’s home territories is still the result of armed conflict.
At the same time, strong land tenure rights are increasingly recognized as essential to post-conflict politics and peacebuilding (Boone 2014, Unruh 2008), as well as to localized, long-term indigenous practices of social repair, as I have demonstrated here. Considering that over one third of those displaced from their land by conflict globally reside in sub-Saharan Africa, where only 1-10% of land (outside of South Africa) is accessed through formal title (RRI 2012), attention to untitled land rights, and to governments’ and international corporations’ respect thereof, would be important to pursue for conflict, post-conflict, and post-displacement scholars, whether they frame their work within transitional justice, peacebuilding, governance, or social repair. Acknowledging the particularities of the current study—how a particular researcher worked within a particular community—it is important that further studies in Acoliland and elsewhere examine initiatives that emerge from communities themselves that correlate local land rights protection initiatives with experiences of violent conflict.

As explored in Chapter 5, in rural Northern Uganda, *kaka* (sub-clans) are currently involved in creating kin-based non-profit foundations, and writing constitutions that translate bodies of Acoli indigenous knowledge and its implicit political, economic, and legal structures. These initiatives have various goals, such as “uniting the *kaka*” and “streamlining indigenous knowledge” after the war and displacement camps, goals I argue that perform social repair. But as I recounted, the initiatives are also seeking to secure

197 The initiative can also be seen as a kind of “harmony ideology” (Nader 1990), which can be a coercive way of establishing internal consensus and quelling dissent as resistance to external threats.
land rights for “sons and daughters of the kaka”, at the same time securing their own indigenous governance, by creating foundations through which they can transform customary land rights that they perceive as precarious into more secure forms (titled).

Translating indigenous community governance into a non-profit foundation with a constitution, as an example, is a local initiative that should be examined beyond how such practices of social repair create and re-create relatedness, or participatory community, as explored in this dissertation. It would be most fruitful to follow and explore how that community seeks to protect their rights, including land rights and indigenous communal governance rooted in relatedness, within national and international frameworks, and if the pursuit itself might serve to unwittingly subordinate the kin-based communal governance organization and their rights to steward their own lands to Western liberal imperialism (Mack 2011). Or, by contrast, how the initiative may be, as Clarke (2009) explores, how:

Individuals’ responses to their transforming circumstances are shaped by locally understood meanings, histories, and interests, which create, in turn, new sites and vehicles for action—new social movements or forms of claim making, reconfigured sites of solidarity and attachment, or new fantasies of success and recognition.

(Clarke 2009:30)

How these initiatives intersect with the contemporary “global land rush”, the sharp rise in land acquisitions aided by local elites in the Global South by businesses in the Global North (with two thirds of the lands acquired being in Africa), as well as with historical land
appropriations, should thus be more explicitly linked to questions of land tenure and land rights in pre, post, and conflict contexts.

Finally, the study recounted in this dissertation was undertaken relatively soon after people had returned home after displacement; two to three agricultural cycles later, depending. People were still very much consumed by the hard work of rebuilding homes and getting gardens to produce enough for survival. The constitution and the non-profit foundation initiative emerged another two agricultural seasons later. Undoubtedly, a longer time frame, and following community practices of repair as they continue to respond to the community’s emerging needs would be important in understanding how people’s social repair needs change through time. It would also be important for understanding the intersections of land security, communal governance, and conflict in the long term.

### 6.4 Final Words and Reflections

I am going to recount here two conversations I had with people in Uganda as I was leaving Padibe after my main period of fieldwork in 2012. The first was with an NGO worker in Kitgum town—a Dutch man I met who was coordinating efforts of a national based advocacy and research group. This man who had been working in Northern Uganda for a few years asked me about my work, and about village life. When I told him about *Kaka Pabwoc* and the degree of communal governance practiced—from land allotment to dispute resolution—and how I, preliminarily at that point, understood social repair to be functioning within, he
exclaimed that Pabwoc must be very unique in Acoliland. He had never heard of “that level” of governance in communities despite the fact that he often worked with “traditional leaders” in addition to local government representatives (LC1s).

The second conversation took place at Makerere University in Kampala. I sat down for some tea in the University café with Professor Okello Ogwang, who is Lango, my supervisor as a research associate at the Makerere Institute for Social Research. He asked me, after all this, what my impressions were. I described that, primarily, I had learned how active and important the kin-networks (I didn’t know what to call them at that point) were in moving on after the war, and in everyday life in general. Upon return to ancestral lands, and the system of tenure, these kin-networks have quickly sprung back to organize daily life. Unlike the Dutch man, he showed little surprise. He replied that that made a lot of sense, “after all Lara, people project themselves onto and manage the land in ways that they know how to.”

I wonder how outsiders, including myself, could not know (or have known) about the strength and range, and persistence of kin-networks, what I call, after Oloya (2015), kin-based communal governance organizations. I wonder how much these “invisibilities” may point to my (our) own cultural biases regarding a vacuum of capable governance, or communal governance capacities, on what is now known as the African continent. And how much these biases are tied to grand narratives, like “terra nullius”, that perpetuate continuing domination of the Global South by the Global North (Abbink et al. 2014, Makki
2014).\textsuperscript{198} Or to the “fictions” of truth, named justice, that serves to uphold the powers and the narratives that work to dominate (Clarke 2009).

As a researcher based in the Global North, I have learned how rural community practices of social repair after devastating experiences of violence implicitly acknowledge these connections, and manifest communities’ fights for their own rights. I conclude with these thoughts here to honour my teachers and their ongoing struggles for peace, communal self-governance, and land protections.

To all the sons and daughters of Bwoc, thank you for being my teachers, and for helping me tell this story. I heard someone clear her throat to speak next. I pass it to you.

\textsuperscript{198} *Terra nullius* is a Latin expression meaning “no man’s land” and refers to territory that is not supposedly occupied. As these authors discuss, it has been used as reasoning by Colonial Governments, as well as in a contemporary sense by promoters of “development” and capitalists, for the occupation of other people’s land.
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Appendices

Appendix A  Tekwaro Pabwoc Workbook
LOK PA JULIE OKOT BITEK

Buk eni buk wa, kak a me Acoli, tutawale pi wan je Pbwoc ma lube l kit me ngac me ngayo wa aye anga, ki kan ma wa a a ki lye, nga ma oweko wawu dud wawo wawo teh macalo lupabwoc kin go ma kuru wa anyim. Buk eni payo wil raa ni wa a a ki I dul mabeco dog et ta keko ki I ot me reko ikik me kwo en aye ma oweko kwo wawu omede anyim. Waayoo Awat Lara, Nyero Augustine, Binaa Okango, ki Yaye Ogwok pi tic ki matek ma oweko buk ni ezene. Buk eni wa dyere pi kaka me Acoli ena ma pire tek pi lutino pabwoc. Lacwec ogwok woe weng.

LOK PA AWAT LARA GIN KI NERO AUGUSTINE

Wa yobo buk enini pi lutino p’Abwoc wak angu wu kware wu wek cawa weng anje kalamu wun noa ki lye. Peny lodito wu pi ter kwo ega ni ki wak wek gu tili u owek ongay ngay oye naka tina tina kanyi. Gi ma ki cyo ping eni ni omede but ter kware wawu ma naka ma oreko niyoo kibot lodito wu. Wa biko no lok, wi ki ododo ni onyero oye ki kume mutuk, ki yuq ki lwe imwayi moga ma bino anyim. Ki bere wu waka ka kama lu rumo cyo la lok moga na cego cego ma lu gur, ka dong li cyo ping ki dong lok moga ma pi gi tigo ma tye i ter kware ma lu mando.

*Lacwec ogwok woe weng

DEDICATIONS

-From Julie Okot Bitek

This book is for us, the people of Acholi, especially we, of Pbwoc who need to remember who we are, where we come from, why we’re still here and the way forward. This book is for us to remember that we come from good people, people who were strong and wise in their way, to give us life. We are ever thankful to Awat Lara, Nyero Augustine, Binaa Okonga, and Yaye Ogwok for doing the work to get this printed. We dedicate this book to the people of Acholi, and in particular the children of Pbwoc.

-From Awat Lara and Nyero Augustine

We made this book for all the proud children of Pbwoc - to present some of your strong heritage and so that you will always know where you come from. Please ask your elders about these stories and songs - to clarify, expand, or correct on the little bit collected here. What is written down is just a small portion of your rich oral heritage that you can access through your elders. We expect the following stories, songs, and tales to be much discussed, fixed, verified, and debated in the years to come! We also left room at the end of the book for you to collect, record and write down other important cultural information that you can find.

Lacwec ogwok woe weng.

***A VERY BIG APWOYO FOR HELP WITH THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS TO OTIL FRANCIS, JENKINS LALOium, AND JULIE OKOT BITEK***
LANYUT

Wan i Pobwoc onemog hi lumogu likwayo pa Atwoc. Atwoc obedo ki awobi aryo, Otuna ki Ocuga. Wa ceng tin, pud walwonge caio lutino pa Otuna, Ocuga, gini ki Abonga. Ocuga opoke odoko Abonga ki ikege pi winywa ma obedo pe ikon gin pi laro me m⦐uku ki ringo i mwaika 1940. Eto st pa ikege pud gwoke nyiing Ocuga wa tin. I kare ma Abonga ki jone opoke ononga ki lwongo gin ni cyama pien ni gin gu dako kam ma yamo kutu gi. Ju mukene pa ikege ma odong cen ki lwongo gi ni oneng sieni gi por laco ni ki weko gi anga.


Pol kiki ma timo Idopila me Bobi okek ikin ngom Acoli eni kaka madito i st me Bobi tye i omoro county.

Lukika mukene ma pe Padlbe nonge i Lamoja/Akwang, Lamit, Akwag, Kitgum Matidi, Tegit Akara, Atagua/Lacek-osott, Puranga, Awur, Bobo, Awere, Bobi me Omoro county, ki kaka matidi pa Bobi benet ye i South Sudan. Kaka mukene bene kilamo nil ye i Alero. Lobobli me omoro en eye kaka madito te Rwot me Bobi ma kom karamni. Akera Kewa Anamia. En wad pa Rwot Otuli Aadiria Lati ni okwongo pa Okello Musaka.

Likwayo me Bobi ma gi tye Padlbe i ceng tin gi bedo i Parish me Lagwele ki Abakadyak. Otoq caro me Pobwoc East ki West, Lomura Kwara, Nyom Aalo, Kamana West, Buola Ayom, Store Bos ki Latic Odoko Owok, Anyibi, Otcu Bab, Larom West ki East, Lobiiri, La ite pe, Ngom Orome North ki South, Mek Mek, Lagwele Okanga ki Lela Amur.

Cik me tekwaro Acoli, pole tye cik me dul kaka Acoli ma patpat matye oket tye pal i district me Acoli tutaale lkt. me tela ki tekwaro. Kaka mukene ma kombedt kilungo gi ni Acoli guluku kulu Nlle ni cake ki i Sudan paka nakna gu oon Kiik. Dul mukene kwara ni Lukwayi Bobi gu as ki i dye Sudan. Pal dul ma etsoyo kema ikare pa Rwot Owok me Padlbe obedo i cere Lala, Ki icere Lala Kwot Owok didak yusu ku po pi ceng i cere Lactic. Cere Lactic cere matidi ento olute ber lony got weng ma ili Lamwe.
Ki Waco ni Rwot Ogwok ogedo kema ne me lwery i Latic me gwoko dogola ne li bot lurero koma ki luakaka me Bobi ma ye cwoke. Mapat ki Bobi kaki mukone ma gu ribo cinji ki Rwot Ogwok ma oweko kaka me Pasilbe odoke tek en aye Pamot, Paqwer, Pobogo, Panyinga, Pawahl ki Guji. Ki Waco ni Rwot me Pasilbe ingeye lazen odoke Rwot mwek mada ikare enoni pi tela maber ki diro me cat. Diro me cat ki tela maber okelo kuc piem holoku me gwoko kaka liwilo.
Introduction

We in Pabwoc are all sons and daughters (descendants) of Abwoc. Abwoc had 2 sons: Otuna and Ocuva. Today we trace ourselves to Otuna, Ocuva and Abonga. Ocuva split into Abonga and Ikege because of a misunderstanding on the subject of a gun and meat around the 1940s, but Ikege's line still keeps the name Ocuva today. When Abonga and his line moved away— they were called Oyomo— because they had moved where there was less people, therefore more fresh air. Those of Ikege that were left behind were called Ongeng; because they were surprised that the others had left.

Abwoc was the son of Bobi. Bobi had three sons: Abwoc, Dera, and Oyo (Tatee plo). Afterwards, 2 more clans came into Bobi: Bobi Agora and Bobi Pawor. All together, there are these 5 clans of Bobi, and they, united, joined Padibe's kingdom in the mid to late 1800's when Rwot Ogwok was chief of Padibe. Rwot Ogwok was able to provide a lot of security at that time due to an extensive trade network, and Padibe became arguably, the most powerful kingdom in Acolland. Rwot Okello Musika was Rwot of Bobi at that time, and it is said that together with Rwot Ogwok, he learned Arabic and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.

Many subclans of Bobi are scattered around Acolland, and the biggest subclan of Bobi is found in Omoro County.

Other Clan members of Bobi outside of Padibe are located at Lamola/Akwang, Lamit, Akwang, Kitum Matidi, Tegut Akara, Atanga/Lacek-otot, Puranga, Awac, Pabo, Awere, Bobi of Omoro County, and a small amount of Bobi of Southern Sudan. Some are also believed to be in Alero. The Bobi of Omoro is the largest in number, under the Rwot of Bobi, presently Aker Kewa Anani. He is the son of Rwot Ola Adiriya, the eldest son of Rwot Okello Musaka.

The descendants of Bobi that are in Padibe today live in the parishes of Lugwel and Akuakyiak. They include the villages of: Padibe East and West, Lomura Kwara, Nyom Ako, Kamama West, Ibwola, Ayom, Store Boo, and Lutic Odoko Owo, Anyihi, Gitar Pabo, Laram West and East, Lubiri, La Ite Pe, Nyom Oromo North and South, Mek Mek, Lagot Okanga and Lek Amur.

The history of the Acoli is generally the history of our clans; mostly with our own distinct political entities, heritage, and customs. Some clans who make up present day Acoli followed the nile down from Sudan and settled at Kilak. Some scholars suggest that Bobi's descendants came down from Sudan further east.

The major settlement of Padibe during Rwot Ogwok of Padibe's time was at Lalak hill. From there Rwot Ogwok
moved westward and made a settlement under Lacic hill. Lacic hill is a small hill, but it is the longest of all the mountains in Lamwo. It is believed that Rwot Ogwook made his Fort at Lacic to avoid attack by his enemies and to offer protection to the other clans who joined him. Aside from Bobi, the other original clans who were with Rwot Ogwook to make the strong kingdom of Padibe include: Pamor, Pceeter, Pobogo, Panyinga, Pnusel, and Cuji.
DOGOLA PABWOC

Ki Waco ni likwayo pa Shilluk ma aa ki i Bar El Gazel i Sudan. Dano ma i Bobi gubino i Uganda ci gu guru kema i Lejaro. Ingeya, lacen gu dak piny i cerek Lulak ka a agikire gu dak i cerek Laci. Dwoog pa dano me Bobi gu ket ki i cerek Laci.

Jo pa Abwoc gusaka dak ki Laci maka naa gu oo i Ngom Oyer. Ki i Ngom Oyer gu mede ki dak Te Poyi ma onongo yat madit kama ga gero kema i Lapyang pi kare manoc. Lapyang aye kabedsa kama pi i tani tye tye lye caaro Lumura. Lacen lacen inge kare manok gu dak i Agolom latele wiigl onongo obedo Ludwaramoi.

Lubore Ludwaramoi onongo ledit kaka i agolo wacon kama caro wa tye tye tin. Ludwaramoi oceto ka nemo okeyo ne Ananiya Odong i Mastikloc kama ogenye panye me nilang anga ma won ngom, pien ni onongo ngom tim kema ki dwaro dwar (tim agolo). Ananiya Odong otero Ludwaramoi ka limo Ageyo Peda ma onongo latela wi Ludwar i tim agolo. Ageyo Peda onongo dano ma bor ma yer onongo kare woko. Ananiya etito wat ma ikin en ki Ludwaramoi bort Ageyo Peda ma tiso ni Ludwaramoi dano me Bobi ma tye ka mito dak. Ageyo Peda oye ento kong omyero gin ki Ludwaramoi but Rwot Madi ma peye ki ninyo ngom. Gugamo Ayu Apeny wad pa Bobi ma onongo bedo i Madi pien en niang ber pa ceto ki laciwak keri malube ki lok ma dok i kom ngom ki bot Rwot.

Dong jo angwen ni Ageyo Peda, Ayu Apeny, Lubore Ludwaramoi ka Ananiya Odong gu ceto bot Rwot Madi Nyangamoi Orucu. Gurwate ki Rwot, gutito i Rwot miti pa Ludwaramoi, Rwot lacen oye ominigl twero me ceto ka neon ngom. Rwot omiyo twero ki Ogeny ni kunyut ngom weng, ento oliko gi omyero gin gu nge ni ngom, ngom pa ja Lemwo, kaka matidi tin i Pialbek, ma gyhe ki Abila ikabedo mapol i kin piny enoni.

JAMI ANGEYA I CARO PABWOC

- WORD I Pabwoc en aye ni pe amyero Ising kidi ki i wii got (teka pa lugulumol) ka Isingo ci Kyeno kot mahol.

-MWOC WA TYE NI
Obaji yee!
Piirigali yee
Punyomo culu, punyomo got
Obac pino yee!
Ka ircebo le, iwaso ni: Ayi yee!
Ka i mwoco mwoc eni l Ikabedo mukene idi Acoli ki ngego
cut ni In i aa ki Pabwoc!

-Ayweya wa: Obino Kene.

-Wa tye ki abila ar iyo i Pabwoc. Acel pa Otuna (Okwa) ki me aryo pa Ocuha (Mengya)

Lok tekwaro mukene ma mito lapeny ki bot ludito kaka
- Cato opil
- Lok ku Bobi Lungi, ento wiro angono ni gaba
- Lweny i kin Payira ki Podibe ki kik ma kik okanyagi kwede
- Lok kom muduku ki Rwat Ogwok
- Bino pa Minso Otara (British) ki loc gi
- Lok kom two odyer

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Founding of Pabwoc Village

It is said that we are descendants of Shilluk who bear their origin in Bar El Gazeh, Sudan. The people of Bobi came into Uganda and settled first by Lujara. We then moved down to Lalak hill and then to Lactic hill. It is there at Lactic that the biggest scattering of Bobi occurred.

The People of Abwoc started moving away from Lactic and they came to Ngom Oyjr (a place), from Ngom Oyjr they moved to Te Poyo (a big tree) and settle at Layyang (for a brief moment). Layyang is the current place where there is a borehole at Lumara Village. After that brief moment they moved to Agolo (the name by then), and they were led by Ludwaromoi.

Lubore Ludwaromoi was the earliest settler here where we have our village today. Ludwaromoi went to see his nephew, Ananiya Odong, in Madiicker, and asked who owned the wilderness around this place- it was a hunting ground back then (tim agolo). Ananiya took Ludwaromoi to visit Agyo Peda (who was in charge of organizing people to go hunting in the lands) - a tall man with a hairy chest - and introduced Ludwaromoi as a man of Bobi who would like to immigrate and settle there. Agyo Peda said ok, let’s go to the Rwoot of Madl to see. He picked up Ayu Apeny - a son of Bobi who had settled in Madi- on the way to see Rwoot because he knew that it is better to have one of your brothers with you to go see the Rwoot. So, the 4 of them - Agyo Peda, Ayu Openy, Lubore Ludwaromoi and Ananiya Odong - went to see Rwoot Madl, Nyangamoi Orucu. They approached Rwoot, explained Ludwaromoi’s request, and Rwoot said, “Ok, go see the land- Openy, show them all the parts, but be careful because the land belonged a long time ago to the people of Lamwo (a small clan in Palabek today), and they have old shrines all over the area.”

So, the 4 of them took a few days trip- the land was very bushy and there were many wild animals like elephants, lions, and leopards everywhere. They settled in the first night in what is now our Logoyo garden. But they decided that they could not settle there - there was no water source and it was too far from Padibe (for protection). Also, a wild animal had eaten the egg that they had laid out the night before. Traditionally, when you wanted to settle somewhere, you put an egg out at night. If the egg was still there in the morning, the place was considered safe from wild animals. If the egg was eaten, it was not safe.

The second night they spent by the rocky outcroppings here in Pabwoc. There was water very close in the Lagoel river, and the egg was still around the next morning - “Kany kamahe!” - Ludwaromoi said. Agyo then asked “Do you want to stay here?” and Ludwaromoi answered “Yes!”, “What will you call your home?” Openy asked. “I will name my home Agolo An Ki Ngural. For me and my neck (me alone).”

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Some details of our village:

- The word of Pabwoc is that we cannot raise a stone up on the rocky place (Lela Pa Lugumoni). If you do, you will chase away the rain.

- Our mwoc (praise names/phrases) are:
  Obaji yee!
  Piringili yee
  Puryomo culu, puryomo got
  Obac: Fino yee
  And, if you spear an animal, you say: ayii! yee!

If you say these phrases in other places in Acolland, they will know right away that you are from Pabwoc!

- Our ayweya is called: Obino Kene

- We have 2 abila in Pabwoc- one pa otuna (Oxwa), the other (smaller) pa ocuza (Mengya)

Other historical events you should ask the elders about:
- The slave trade
- Dispute that Bobi is Langi, disproven by the bird
- Pinyira-Padibe war, and the help of the bees
- Ogwo’s tusk gun
- British contact and rule
- Smallpox epidemic
Wer/Songs

Macala tekwaro ma ngene, we gwoko jamii ma ottime Ikare ma okato amgec i nyiing kwon ki bene i wer. Map’ aye wer mogo ma pir gi tego i ker Pbwoc. Peny lodito wu wek gu wer bat wu ki bene gu tit pingko ki wero wer ne.

As a predominantly oral culture, we record our history in the names given when you are born (nyiing kwon), and in the songs that we sing. The following are some important songs to Pbwoc’s heritage. Please ask the elders to sing these songs and tell you the stories that they describe.

1. Wer Bobi Song

Bobi Ryeko Kulu, Kulu wa Pe, kula pa Alunya,
kula pa lubure Jo Padibe bi winyo,
Lamera Jo Ayama Ma ryeko narm, Padibe Dera Ma oryek narm,
Ryeko narm yee Bobi Ryeko, Kula Waie Kula Pa Alunya, Kula Lubure Padibe Winyo,
Kula Pa Alunya Kula Pa Lubure Jo Padibe bi neno.

ganye ni: wer eni ni wara kama Bobi ooo ki iye ki wot gi

English translation:

Bobi moves following the river, we don't have our river; there is only river of Alunya,
The group of Lubure, the people of Padibe we hear,
My Sister, the people of Ayama moves following the sea, and Padibe of Dera who follows the sea
Bobi moves following the sea yee, we don't have our group, there is only the group of Alunya, the group of Lubure Padibe will onetime hear them
The groups of Alunya and Lubure Padibe will onetime see them
(This is repeated several times)

Explanation: This song tells the origin and movement of the Babi clan.
2. WER OGWOK SONG

Kaka onge, Gang kal pa Rwot ka igymo kara rac, dît do
Un wunen ka Icaya, owaco(x2)
Mmmmm Papa, wun wunenka Icaya owaco
Mmmmm Papa, wun wunen Ka Icaya owaco, wun wutit te kwaro Ka onge.
Gang kal pa Rwot Ogwok ka Ipyemo kara rac dang dît do,
Wun wunen ka Icaya okato imony, (x2) wun wotit kwaro Kaka onge.

Ganye ni: Wer eni ni ki wer eni ni ki wem me kero deyo ki me meto tek pa Rwot Ogwok ma kpe ki loc ma pol ato ikin en ki Rwoti mukene i Acol. Ni gero ni ma aye ma pale were ka ki ceto i kweny me miyo kero ki tek kwiny bat cao me kweny.

English Translation:
The clans should get to know that the chieftaincy of Ogwok
If you challenge it is bad. You will see what Icaya has said
Mmmmm Papa. You will see what Icaya has said,
Mmmmm Papa. You see what Icaya has said.
We should tell our ancestral culture so that the clan should know
The homestead of Ogwok if you challenge it, it’s really big

Explanation: This song was sung to glorify the strength and the competency of Rwot Ogwok following the various victorious struggles between him and other Rwots of Acol. It was believed that it was sung mostly by women before the fighting to give the men strength and the courage to fight.

3. WER OTOLE SONG

Ayro a willo yee ngom pa Rubanga awilo, kikikiri ma bot
Obol, woweko ngom dok wadil
Ayro a willo yee, (x2)
Eee Papa ngom pa rubanga Awilo,
Ayro a willo, (x2)
Ayro Willo, Kikikiri ma bot Ocota, ngom pa rubanga dok ki wadil,
Eeeeee ngom pa rubanga awilo Ayero Owilo (x4)

ganye ni: Wer eni ni piye tek bat ja Icaya ma lupe ki laronogam ma obelo te yee i kore ena ni

English Translation:
Ayro has bought God’s land yee,
It’s because of disturbances of Obol,
who left the land to the relatives
Ayro has bought yee,
Eee Papa, the land of the god I have bought
Ayro has bought (x2)
Ayro has bought, because of the disturbances from Ocota, the land of god will go back to the relative
Eeeeee the land of the god Awilo has bought
You see if Icaya has joined the Army,
so you tell this culture to the clan to make them know

Explanation: This song is important to the people of Icaya, in regard to the land wrangles that existed at that time.
4. LUMURA SONG

Eee lumura wun wunek ngu woko tong cingi dong doko merok ikam ngu,
ili yee, coo ocamo coo,
Lumura wun ocub ngu woko
Lela, Lela pa Lubwor
Lutini pa etwoi,
Eee lumura onek ngu ki tong
Wun ocub ngu ki tong, tong cingi doko merok ikam ngum,
Iyee yee, lela pa lubwor awobe ocamo coo,
Eee Lumura onek ngu woksoon.

Ganye Ni: Peny lodita wa wek gu gony yen wer eni ni.

English Translation:
Eee Lumura, you killed the wild giant,
let your spear become an enemy to the wild giant (lion)
ilili yee, men will be men,
Lumura you should kill the wild giant,
in the place of the stone
The stony place of lions
Children of etwoi
Eee Lumura you should kill the wild giant with your spear (XZ)
Let your spear became an enemy to the wild giant,
Iyee, the stony places of lions,
men have become men now
Eee lumura you should kill the wild giant

Explanation: Please ask the elders to explain this song.

5. WER LUO SONG

Eee lumura wun wunek ngu woko tong cingi dong doko merok ikam ngu,
ili yee, coo ocamo coo,
Lumura wun ocub ngu woko
Lela, Lela pa Lubwor
Lutini pa etwoi,
Eee lumura onek ngu ki tong
Wun ocub ngu ki tong, tong cingi doko merok ikam ngum,
Iyee yee, lela pa lubwor awobe ocamo coo,
Eee Lumura onek ngu woksoon.

Ganye Ni: Peny lodita wa wek gu gony yen wer eni ni.

English Translation:
Eee the vultures move round Lubura
Eee our children, just praise death instead
Eee Our children called death as mere sleep, yeeeee
But Ludwaja runs away from lubwor (< it’s an animal but timid>
No boys really (it’s also repeat several time)

Explanation: Please ask the elders to explain this song.
6.

Lweny mony kara rac,
Iweny mwony karac, owek joni odok tugl,
mony Ocoro Kunyangong yung malo ca,
jonj wa wa walworo Labuja,
Wan waringo atta jonj wa walworo Labuja.

Lweny Mony Karac. Iweny mony Karac, owek jonj.
Odok tugl mony ocoro kunyangong yung Malo caa.
jonj wa waringo Labuja
Wan waringo atta jonj wa waringo Labuja

Ganye N: Peny lidito wo wek gu gany tyen wer eni ni.

English Translation:
Fighting between soldiers is really bad,
This fighting is really bad tell this people to go back to their home place,
This people have really arrived from the East.
We are fearing Labuja,
Fighting between soldiers is really bad,
This fighting is really bad tell this people to go back to their home place,
This people have really arrived from the East.

Explantation: Please ask the elders to explain this song.

7.

Kalodi lwor, Kalodi lwor dako loyo.
Kalodi lwor lok pa Iweny dako loyo.
Alliker kwany monya ka lwoto waciromo.
Waciromo Lamola, mmmm kalodi dako loyo.
Coo kara lwor, coo kara lwor gyelo ikak,
Coo Kara Lwow lok pa palwony dako loyo.
Alliker kwany dyang ka lwoto waciromo Lamola.
Mmmm cookara lwor dako loyo.

Ganye N: Peny lidito wo wek gu gany tyen wer eni ni.

English Translation:
Kalodi is really fearful, to the extent that
he is even defeated by a woman.
Kalodi is really fearful that, if it comes to fighting, he is defeated by a woman.
Alliker take my soldiers when you are moving,
Then we shall meet.
We shall meet in Lamola, mmmm kalodi is fearful and he is defeated by a woman.
Men are really fearful, men are really fearful, they even defeat in their Khaki shorts.
Men are really fearful and they are defeated by women.
Alliker take my soldiers when you are moving.
Then we shall meet.
We shall meet in Lamola, mmmm kalodi is fearful and he is defeated by a woman.

Explantation: Please ask the elders to explain this song.
MYEL/DANCES

Ewoola
Apati
Otole
Dingi Dingi
Larakwa Raka
Ajere
Lakokku Kolu
Aguma (Adungu)
Nanga
Ajiye
Myel Jok
Myel Lyel
LamuyA
Lalar Akel
Ohet
Ajere
Myel Lyel
Lecuochu
Myel Acut
Lamuya
Omik/Jukeme
CARO LOK/PROVERBS

Openy ladito wu ikom caro lok magi ma tye i buk pa Okot P’ Bitik “Caro Lok Acoll”. Pol sake gi tye ma cego cego ento wa miyo mogo ma ki gonyo tyen gi ping kany.

Acoll gi tye ki caro lok gi miya ki miya ma gi tye ma beco ma bene ikin mukene loko i kom ryeko waf. ki waco ni caro lok Acoll obedu ryeko ma tino tino i lok me ryeko me kwo pa Acoll (Lubwa P’ Chong). Iwinyo dong caro lok adil i kare ma okato angec? Ingeyo mukene?

Please ask your elders about the following proverbs that were found in Okot p’ Bitik’s “Acoli Proverbs” book. They are usually used in shortened form, but he provided the full ones as written below. There are literally hundreds of Acoll proverbs that beautifully, and sometimes humorously, communicate the wisdom of our people! It is said that Acoll proverbs are “small windows into the soul of the Acoll’s philosophy of life” (Lubwa p’ Chong). How many have you heard of before? Do you know others?

1. Agoro pe camo kato kulu
   Agoro termites do not cross a stream to feed on the other side

2. Agulu pi odiyo otac
   Water pot presses upon the pot

3. Ali myero ki okwata
   Causing trouble should be left to kites

4. Cip aye otera l tim
   It is the apron skirt that took me away

5. Arwot ki oda
   I am chief in my own house

6. Amuka poro tyene ki pa wonne
   The young rhino compares the size of its spoor with his father’s

7. Kicaa pa ladit pe dong none
   An elder’s handbag is never completely empty

8. Lacan ma kwo pe kinyero
   No one laughs at the poor man as long as he lives

9. Labul tang gweny o ngayo ka pene
   Who roasts many eggs knows where the embryo is
10. Ladyel ma lapele tur bad dero  
A kid which is too lively breaks its bones on the granary.

11. Laheero dok le meng  
Cowardly men go back into your mother’s womb.

12. Oocok man ki bye-ne  
Each ocok plant grows on its own ant hill.

13. Okwero pwony cito ki cet ka pa maro  
He who rejects advice goes to his mother’s-in-law’s with excreta on his heels.

14. Pyem tutwal amiyo lak gweno peke  
Too much argument mad chicken to have no teeth.

15. Gin caka pe moko odoyo  
Crust is not formed when the millet flour is from the caka.

16. Gipoko pyer ngwen  
The two friends share the white ant.

17. Kulu pong ki jange  
A river is filled by its tributaries.

18. Lacwee camo ki otako  
A potter eats off a potsherard.

19. Ladwar neon opoko pil ki wange  
The hunter looks into the water gourd with his own eyes.

20. Lak lyec pe loyo rwole  
An elephant is not overburdened by his tusks.

21. Mon nywal ki nyek gi  
Women give birth with the help of their co-wives.

22. Ogwal acel obalo wang pil  
One frog spoils the well.

23. Ryeko pe pa ngat acel  
Wisdom or knowledge is not for only one person.

24. Um ki wang  
Nose and eyes.

25. Tong gweno oloya Menya  
Menya failed to get an egg.

26. Acut pep ye ata  
Vultures do not alight anyhow.

27. Agulu pil to idagola  
Water pot breaks at the door.
28. Apara bat oneko apwoya
   Blind copying killed the hare

29. Ayom mudong cen nyero lb lawote
   The monkey laughs at the long tail of the one in front of him

30. Bedo kacel miyo okolok lak iteri
   If you sit in one position for too long, a centipede will crawl into your bottom

31. Ber ber pa lalaa
   She is as beautiful as the lalaa

32. Gwok aye dok ka nango ngokke
   It is a dog who returns to lick his vomit

33. I lusuku col
   Inside the barrel of the gun is dark

34. Itingo wic ki leb
   You will take the head as well as the tongue

35. Labwor ma kok pe mako lee
   A roaring lion does not catch any animal

36. Ladong cen mato pil ma rac
   He who comes last drinks muddy water
37. Lak kweri pe to nono
The blade of the hoe does not wear out for nothing

38. Mot mot okena munu posta
Steadily steadily the white man doesn’t fall

39. Nyako ma wog mino etoo, myelo neen ceng
A girl whose mother is blind, dances and looks at the sun

40. Nyuka ka aton icip pe dok nange
Porridge that dropped on the apron string cannot be licked

41. Oceke ki weko kun mol
The beer sucking tube is left while it is still flowing

42. Olam ma mitpe cek wangu aryo
Sweet plums are not produced twice

43. Otigo ma nok tyeko kwon
A little otigo sauce finishes a whole loaf

44. Tar lak miyo waryero
It is to show the whiteness of our teeth that we laugh

45. Te okono abur bong luputu
Pumpkin growing wild in the homestead is not uprooted

46. Pil pe mol dok tere
Water does not flow upwards to the source of the river
NGEC/NOTES

Tii ki pot karatoc ma twolo eni ni me copy ping ododo, wer, care lok ki mukene ma dwong ataa ma iromo guru gi i kom Paltwoc ki tekwaro Acoli.

Please use these empty pages to write down more stories, songs, proverbs etc. that you can gather about Paltwoc and Acoli heritage.
Appendix B  Household Survey Guiding Questions

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR GROUP INTERVIEWS

“Do Not Uproot the Pumpkin Fruit”: Intergenerational Knowledge Transmissions and Social Repair after Two Decades of War in Northern Uganda.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Patrick Moore, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia (UBC), 1-604-822-6359; patrick.moore@ubc.ca

Co-Investigator: Lara Rosenoff, PhD Candidate in Anthropology.

What is “Do Not Uproot the Pumpkin Fruit”? Do Not Uproot the Pumpkin Fruit is a community-based collaborative ethnographic study that examines post-conflict processes of social repair in one village in rural Northern Uganda. The collection of household histories and theatre dialogues will explore transformations in intergenerational knowledge exchange through wartime and help determine the overall importance of intergenerational knowledge transfers and questions of culture, to post-conflict social and material reconstruction. It will explore and foreground communities' priorities and needs in a post-conflict setting.

Participants: adults or elders, aged between 25-90, who reside full time in Pabwoc East village, Lamwo district, Northern Uganda.

Procedures: The participants will be asked to participate in a group interview at the time and place of their choosing that will last approximately a maximum of 2 hours. Other participants in said group interview will consist of other adult members of their household. The purpose of the group interview is 1) to record a household history, and 2) to explore the views and experiences of culture in the current post-conflict setting in Northern Uganda.

When you signed the consent form relating to this interview, you indicated that you understood the following:
• Sessions may be audio and video-recorded.
• Some of the activities will be transcribed into typewritten form.
• You may stop the activities at any time for any reason.
• You may withdraw from the project at any time.
• Your name and other identifying features will remain anonymous, that is, any identifying features will not be divulged in dissemination.
• If participation in the workshop becomes emotionally distressing for you, you have the right to stop the dialogue or withdraw from participation. The researcher will facilitate appropriate support for you if you are in distress and request such support.
• Research materials like videotapes and transcripts will be identified only by code number, held in a secure location and will not be publicly accessible.
• If you have any concerns about the way this research is conducted you can contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598, or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.
• If you have questions or desire further information with respect to this study you can contact: Patrick Moore, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, V6T 1Z1, 1-604-822-6359; patrick.moore@ubc.ca.

Guiding Questions: (The interviews will be semi-structured and will be developed around the following questions):

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND HISTORY:

1. Who is here today and how are you related? (Including relations by blood? by marriage? by other means? Clan affiliation?)

2. How many huts/houses comprise your household? Please describe their functions.

3. Who else, who is not here today (youth eg.), is part of your household?

4. When did you move to your current area of residence?

5. Why did you move to your current area of residence? (Include questions regarding access to land, livelihood etc.)

6. Who comprised your household when you moved?

7. Where did you live before? Were you living within the same basic household (as far as composition) before moving to your current location? (Include here moves as far back as the participants can recall).
8. Why did you move on these different occasions?

9. In each location, who was living as part of the household, and what were the relations of the members of the household. (Include here members who passed away, were killed, were abducted etc.)

TEKWARO:

1. *What is tekwaro pa Acoli* to you?

2. Has it changed/evolved/transformed over the years? If yes, how has it changed/evolved/transformed over the years? If not, how has it remained?

3. Why, in your opinions, did these practices concerning tekwaro change/evolve/transform, or how have they remained the same?

4. What are the most important elements of tekwaro pa Acoli today? And why? What will you teach your children about tekwaro pa Acoli?

*Is there anything you want to ask me?
### Appendix C  Timeline: National Politics, Omono Justo Langoya’s Family’s (the Author’s Host Family’s) Major Life Events, the Author’s Visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya have their 1st child (a daughter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Acan and Omono have their 2nd child (a son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Acan and Omono have their 3rd child (a son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Acan and Omono have their 4th child (a son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The LRA establishes itself under Joseph Kony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Acan and Omono have their 5th child (a son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Peace talks begin, then fail, between the LRA and Gov’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Acan and Omono have their 6th child (a son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>LRA massacres throughout Lamwo County provoke massive displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Family flees to Kitgum town (January) and other places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Increased LRA activity leads to Gov’t military (UPDF) decimating all those found outside of Padibe IDP camp rebels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Omono’s sister is killed by the LRA and other places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Family flees to Padibe IDP Camp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Author’s 1st visit to Northern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Author’s 2nd visit to Northern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Ceasefire signed between LRA and Gov’t. Peacetalks begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Authors 3rd visit to Northern Uganda (Padibe IDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>Authors 4th visit to Northern Uganda (Padibe IDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Peacetalks fail, but ceasefire holds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Author’s 5th visit to Northern Uganda (Padibe IDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Whole family returns home to Pabwoc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Author’s 6th visit to Northern Uganda (Padibe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Author’s 7th visit to Northern Uganda (Pabwoc) (Major fieldwork component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Author’s 8th visit to Northern Uganda (Pabwoc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Timeline:

1980 Apollo Milton Obote wins the National election and is sworn in as President after Idi Amin’s dictatorship was overthrown. He previously served as Prime Minister in 1962-66, and then as self-appointed President from 1966 until 1971, when he himself was ousted by Idi Amin.

A first child (Labong Concy) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc.

1983 A second child (Nyero Augustine Caesar) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc.

1985 General “Tito” Lutwa Okwello, commander of the UNLA, overthrows Obote, and rules Uganda through a joint military council.

1986 The NRA under Museveni defeats the UNLA, and deposes Okello. Yoweri Museveni is sworn in as the new President. The NRA occupies Acoliland, and the former UNLA forms different rebel groups as UPDA. Alice Lakwena forms the Holy Spirit Movement.

A third child (Ojara John Bosco) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc.

1987 Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement launches offensive against NRA.

Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina celebrate their ‘traditional’ marriage.

1988 The Peace Peace Agreements take place. Members of the UPDA who don’t sign, reorganize into new rebel groups, and some begin to follow Joseph Kony.

1989 A fourth child (Oyoo Batholomew) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc.

1990 The LRA establishes itself under the leadership of Joseph Kony.

1991 A fifth child (Okot Terence) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc.

1993-4 Peace talks are initiated between the Government and the LRA. They fail.

1995 A sixth child (Pacoto Innocent) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Pabwoc.

1997 Omono Justo Langoya, Acan Almarina, and their children flee to Kitgum town in response to LRA massacres throughout Lamwo County.
A seventh child (Oyet Geoffrey) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Kitgum town.

1999  An eighth child (Agal “Ayaa” Proscovia) is born to Omono Justo Langoya and Acan Almarina in Kitgum town.

Omono Justo Langoya, Acan Almarina, and their children return to Pabwoc.

2003  Acan Almarina and the children move to Padibe IDP camp after repeated LRA attacks in and around Pabwoc. Many people from Pabwoc are abducted and killed at this time. Omono Justo Langoya remains behind to care for the livestock, but follows soon after when the UPDF declares all those outside the camps as LRA collaborators.

2004  The author’s first visit, in Gulu and Kitgum towns, visiting several IDP camps.

2005  The author’s second visit in Gulu and Kitgum towns, visiting several IDP camps.

The International Criminal Court unseals arrest warrants for Kony and top 4 LRA commanders in October.

2006  The Government and the LRA enter into the Juba peace talks. A cease-fire is announced in September.

The author’s third visit, this time in the Mission in Padibe IDP camp. Meets Nyero Augustine Caesar and his parents Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya. Works with Aceng Beatrice to document her life in the camp.

2007  The author’s fourth visit, again in the Mission in Padibe IDP camp. Continues working with Beatrice.

2008  Kony fails to sign the final peace agreement.

The author’s fifth visit, this time in Padibe IDP camp. She lives next door to Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya in the camp, and continues working with Beatrice.

Acan Almarina, Omono Justo Langoya, and their children return to Pabwoc in late December, early January.

2009  The LRA are pushed into DRC, CAR and South Sudan, where they continue to operate.

2010  The author’s sixth visit, in Padibe at the Mission. She visits Acan Almarina and Omono Justo Langoya, their children, and extended family in Pabwoc.
2012  The author’s seventh visit, in Pabwoc from March to October (with a break in May) for her main period of fieldwork.

Nyro Augustine Ceasar (Omono and Acan’s first born son) and Aywek Fiona commence their ‘traditional’ courtship.

A daughter (Agena) is born to Docus, the daughter of Omono’s sister, Ataro Santina, who lives in the same homestead.

2013  Nyero Augustine and Aywek Fiona have their first child (Amito Gabriella Acan).

2015  The author’s eighth visit, in Pabwoc in April to discuss the results of the research project.

The collaborative workbooks are distributed to 175 households in Pabwoc.