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NO SUCH THING AS COLLECTIVE GOODS: THE POLITICAL UTILITY OF LOW LEVEL  
CIVIL WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA

by

ALEXANDRA ZENA ALICIA WISHART

Under the Direction of Dr. Carrie Manning

ABSTRACT

With the extant work on civil war duration as a starting point, this project uses the Ugandan case to identify and address theoretical aporias in our existing understanding of the determinants of duration. The vast majority of existing work begins with the assumption that the rebel force is the determining factor in the duration of conflict. Challenging this assumption, I argue that civil war duration should be understood as a function of the calculations made by both the rebel units and the established state, a dynamic that has implications for the way in which we think of the preferences of the state. Finally, that incentive structures exist, given the nature of post-colonial states that lower the utility of peace for elected leadership and reduce their willingness to provide peace as a collective good to the broader population as civil war can be used as one of Jeffrey Herbst's buffer mechanisms.

INDEX WORDS: Civil war, Duration, Uganda, Collective security, Social Contract Theory ,  
State creation, Lord's Resistance Army, Acholi, Buffer mechanisms

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OF LOW LEVEL CIVIL WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA

by

ALEXANDRA ZENA ALICIA WISHART

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2010

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2010

NO SUCH THING AS COLLECTIVE GOODS: THE POLITICAL UTILITY  
OF LOW LEVEL CIVIL WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA

by

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**DEDICATION**

To my mother and grandmother for their constant support and my Aunt Lydia and Uncle Graham for their persistent and sometimes inexplicable faith in my ability to be brilliant. Without you all this would not have been possible.

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For many people the process of graduate school is an exercise in masochism. Reading until your eyes are blurry, regularly questioning your ability to compete with intelligent people, generating a thought not previously proposed by someone else and then burnishing that small glimmer of an idea into something useful, or at least theoretically interesting. All the while remembering to brush your teeth, buy groceries, and smile at people in the elevator. My experience, while at times so challenging that working in a gas station seemed preferable, was mostly rewarding and intellectually exhilarating. Below is a severely abbreviated list of people, without whom, this project would have not been possible.

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## INTRODUCTION

This project begins with the question of why the civil war in Uganda has lasted so long and, more broadly, constructs a theory of civil war duration that focuses on the preferences of the state rather than the capacity or motivations of the active rebel movement. The existing literature on civil war duration provides a number of possible explanations for why civil conflict continues, but the conflict in Northern Uganda has escaped the explanations provided by the dominant camps in the civil war duration literature. Rather than following the prescriptions and coming to an end, the conflict continues. To address this puzzle, I suggest that in semi-democratic or transitional countries, a low intensity conflict in the boundary areas coupled with the injection of consistent international assistance allows the ruling elites of the country to manipulate two basic elements of domestic politics to assure their re-election or continued access to political power. Scrutinizing these elements, the relationships between state and society and between the state and the military, is crucial to understanding the length of both civil war and political tenure.

From this, I build a theory of preference ordering that synthesizes literature on domestic constituency management and security sector operation in semi-democratic states that suggests that the interaction of international funding and a low level peripheral insurgency can insulate politicians from the requirements of the national constituency, instead allowing politicians to focus on providing resources and services for those key constituencies that continue to pose a threat to individual politician's political tenure while not expending the resources necessary to end the conflict whose cost is borne by the marginalized minority. After outlining my theory, I apply it to the case of the Northern Ugandan civil war that has continued since 1986 despite the

strengthening of the state both militarily through bilateral military assistance and economically given the growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The conflict in Northern Uganda has continued since the ousting of Milton Obote in 1986 by Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army. This makes it the longest running conflict on the continent. What explains the persistence of this conflict? The current literature on civil war duration produces a number of clear theoretical hypotheses as to the factors that contribute to the termination of conflict. Using the available work as a starting point, this project begins with an assessment of the literature and then uses the Ugandan case to identify and address theoretical aporias in our existing understanding of the determinants of duration. Though they are distinct sub fields in the civil war discourse, civil war duration and termination are inextricably linked; a decrease or elimination of factors that feed extended conflict can lead to its speedy termination, as was the case in Angola when the external backers of both the rebels and the government withdrew support. The fundamental question must be: what goes into the calculations rebels and governments use when deciding to end or continue a civil war? Finally, I propose that a perverse incentive structure, created by international and domestic variables, makes a low-level conflict in the north politically useful without threatening the central government. This incentive structure then opens conflict as a tool for political elites with which they can manage their political constituencies. I expand the existing theory proposed by Jeffrey Herbst on "buffer mechanisms" to include low-level peripheral conflict as, like citizenship policies and fixed national boundaries, conflict limits the ability of the opposition to organize or fully participate in politics while simultaneously limiting the demands of external actors. I examine the tools used by political elites to maintain the current political system and at the same time project an appearance of commitment to ending the conflict and strengthening democratic practice.

To conclude, I discuss the broader implications of this theory. The crux of my argument is that there are static power relationships within Uganda that are fundamentally changed by the ongoing conflict in the North and the influx of international assistance. These power dynamics exist in all countries but specifically in those countries where the constitutional limitations on power are weakly instituted, rational actors can be expected to use conflict to consolidate their position in the system rather than view war as a breakdown in politics as a whole.

A cursory survey of the current media coverage and academic work on the civil war in Northern Uganda reveals a singular focus on the rebel army, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the sensationalized recruitment of children into the LRA. The rebels are painted as monsters that arbitrarily kill and maim with no political motivations; in effect, the depravity of the rebel unit perpetuates the conflict. This coverage of the group's grim potency, however, is juxtaposed against other pictures and reports of the LRA as a threadbare group that can barely keep its troops in shoes and clothing. There appear to be two LRAs: the one of legend and the one of reality. I contend that unpacking this apparent incongruity is essential to comprehending the civil war in Uganda, as the admittedly dangerous LRA, often the only focus of world media attention, is also a tool used by political power elites to achieve three goals: limit the participation of oppositional political groups, maintain the support of the military while limiting the threat of coup or mutiny, and provide political cover for the limited investment in infrastructure and inclusion of northern ethnic groups in government positions. Teasing out why the conflict in Uganda has lasted so long in spite of what we know about the determinants of civil war duration from the literature on African politics and state development, and the development trajectory of Uganda, will allow me to build a more robust theory of civil war duration.

I identify the most salient motivations for the protracted low intensity conflict in Uganda by examining both current civil war literature and previous literature on the determinants of war

in Uganda. I conclude that the incentive structure is present for the government to maintain the conflict in the Northern, Acholi dominated, parts of the country as a way of consolidating political power and maintaining international interest and aid. To provide a foundation for my theory of political management, I present an analysis of the relationship between the Acholi people and the government in contrast with the LRA and the Acholi. Ethnicity is often a tool used by power elites to manage the expectations of domestic groups to privilege the dominant or limit the expectations of excluded groups and mask the political and fiscal utility of limited conflict rather than the key factor in duration. The practical limitation of the political participation of the population affected by the insurgency is a key determinant in why conflicts with peripheral insurgencies such as the one in Uganda are allowed to continue. I then situate Uganda in the international system to show that because of its relative stability, even at the cost of democracy, international donors are willing to overlook the conflict because, superficially, Uganda appears to be an African success story in a region of the continent characterized by instability and full scale conflict. This may seem counterintuitive given the stated international commitment to peace and democracy,<sup>1</sup> but donor countries are under pressure domestically to show positive progress as a result of aid contributions in order to justify continued international involvement and, in the post 9/11 era, to find and maintain allies in the US's war on terror in the developing world.

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<sup>1</sup> As evidenced by global and regional agreements such as *OAU Charter (1963)*, *African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1986)*, *Charter of the United Nations (1945)* *United Nations Fund for Democracy (2005)*

## EXISTING LITERATURE ON CIVIL WAR DURATION

According to Thomas Kuhn, scientific paradigms are represented by competing camps of theorists and competing paradigms are a choice between “fundamentally irreconcilable” schools of thought. When theorists enter into a debate about fundamental questions, each group uses its own paradigm to argue in that paradigm's defense. The result is a circularity and incapacity to share a universe of discourse (Kuhn; 1996). Woodward and Pickard call this inability to reconcile new or oppositional paradigms the tyranny of theory, which prevents forward movement in a discipline stymied by divergent but fundamental understandings of political phenomena (Woodward n.d.).

The extant literature on conflict duration is no different and can be separated into three theoretical camps whose proponents privilege particular features of the socio-economic and political environment when explaining war termination: macroeconomic indicators, state capacity indicators, and commitment issues. All three camps, while legitimate attempts at identifying the motivations of rebel forces, make a counter-intuitive theoretical assumption: that the weaker party in the conflict, the rebel force, is the determining factor in the duration of conflict. In most of the dominant theories of international relations, researchers concern themselves primarily with those parties who wield the greatest amount of power. The hypothesis that the stronger party in civil war, usually the state, is the determining factor in war is the starting point for the theory constructed in this paper. The state, rather than being an incidental and ultimately benign actor, is, therefore, assumed to have preferences and strategies that are constantly being modified to achieve the ultimate goal of politicians - the capture and maintenance of political power and access to state resources.



The accepted theories of civil war duration do not adequately explain the civil war in Uganda. Uganda, however, is not fundamentally different from other civil wars in the sense that the factors behind the duration are different. Rather, I suggest that there are key determinants of duration missing from existing models. Many of the variables included in current models of duration are taken directly from the literature on civil war onset<sup>2</sup> as they represent theoretically important facets of conflict. This is a useful starting point for theoretical testing but when considering onset we are usually only assessing the calculations of rebel leaders. Because onset is generally one-sided, the debate on rebel greed versus group grievances is theoretically reasonable. In duration models, however, the calculations of both the rebel group and the government forces must be considered and variables addressing two sets of calculations must then be present.

In this section, I present the leading perspectives from each theoretical camp as each introduces different predictions about what factors make war last and I assess their explanatory merit in this case. Finally, I introduce the literature that focuses explicitly on the current war in Northern Uganda. I argue that the Ugandan specific literature largely abandons the attempt to construct theories around the assumptions that actors will act in their rational self-interest as much of the current theory focuses on the mental capacity of the leadership or ethnic or religious motivations of the rebel groups. Most importantly the broader conclusion to be gleaned from the Uganda literature is that the LRA is at most, half-heartedly motivated by political goals, which is troubling given the obvious challenges that poses both for understanding the conflict and, perhaps more importantly, how to bring it to an end.

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<sup>2</sup> Collier, Hoeffler, and Soderbom's 2004 article "on the Duration of Civil War" explicitly tests the model of civil war onset in a Cox Proportional Hazard model to see if the same determinants of civil war onset were useful in the explanation of duration. They found that the model did "remarkably badly" when predicting duration and that the overall explanatory power of the model is 20%.

### Economic Literature

It is widely believed that cultural groups have a comparative advantage in maintaining collective action because they are less prone to free riding than groups formed on other social foundations and because the differences between combatants are static; elites can maintain participation of group members simply by continuing to emphasize “chosen traumas”<sup>3</sup> to reactivate feelings of insecurity. Theorists have suggested that in-group altruism, common knowledge, and readily available social networks strengthen the ability of elites to trigger these emotional responses and maintain collective action because common interest and in-group policing mechanisms are already in place and more direct and personal benefits or threats are not necessary to maintain compliance. These conclusions on collective action and group participation are vital to understanding why people join rebel movements and what compels them to keep fighting. In recent years, however, some scholars have suggested that economic incentives can act as a substitute for cultural similarities.

Economic theories of onset and duration are based on the argument that while collective action problems are possible to overcome, ethnicity or shared grievances are insufficient determinants of continued participation. To sustain a rebellion, elites will necessarily turn to selective economic benefits for participants. Hirschleifer proposes a Machiavellian theorem that states that no person will ever give up an opportunity to gain an advantage even if this requires exploiting another party (Korf; 2007). Additionally, Grossman in his essay “Kleptocracy and Revolution” somewhat cynically concludes “the romantic notions of idealists notwithstanding, the characterization of revolutions as manifestations of kleptocratic rivalry seems historically accurate” (Grossman; 1999). These theorists assume a Hobbesian theory of human nature and,

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<sup>3</sup> Kinnvall defines chosen traumas as group histories that carry intense emotional resonance that often the basis of the intractability of ethnic conflict.

while they recognize the role of collective problems in civil war, they maintain that the mobilization of grievances is useful only in the sense that it provides popular legitimacy for combatants' behavior and allows them to prolong conflict as long as the economic benefits remain available. Economic reward for participants is necessary to sustain civil war.

Building a model on the theory of rebellion as a business, in *Greed and Grievance in Civil War* (2000) Collier and Hoeffler conclude that political and social variables that are most obviously related to grievances (ethnic and religious divisions, political repression and inequality) have little explanatory power when talking about civil war *onset*. By contrast, economic variables, which could proxy some grievances but are perhaps more obviously related to the viability of rebellion, provide considerably more explanatory power.

Also rejecting the model of grievance mobilization, Mats Berdal and David Keen identify seven economic activities of rebel and state forces that may prevent the end of civil war and suggests that victory may not be the only goal of rebel units (Berdal and Keen; 1997). Collier (2000) compares rebellion to household theft, where natural resources substitute for personal wealth. Such rebellion is a variety of crime, but with distinctive differences. Because of the differential degrees of geographic concentration of household and natural resources, and hence differences in the difficulty of defense, the geographic choke points concentrate the activity of predation in a relatively few locations. A corollary of this concentration is that natural resource extraction is relatively easy to defend once acquired. He interprets these finding to support his "rebellion-as-business" in which the critical incentive is delivered during the war rather than after as in models where victory is the key goal

The rebel greed hypothesis presented above is popular in policy circles and much of the conventional wisdom on civil war references the theories of these scholars. A resurgence of

skepticism among civil war scholars in recent years, however, has led to challenges to the validity of the greed hypotheses, with suggestions that the solely economic incentives of war are an over simplification of a complex phenomenon (Ross; 2004, Fearon; 2004, Snyder and Bhavnani; 2005 Sambanis; 2004). In addition, the greed versus grievance model explicitly examines the motivations of the rebel group, and assumes that the government has a vested interest in the termination of the conflict, or at least, that it prefers peace to conflict. Collier concludes that rebel units will have to be sufficiently large to protect themselves against the government forces and adequately financed for the same reason. This conclusion implies that the size and strength of a successful rebel unit is, in fact, a function of capacity of the state. Put simply, if the size and strength of the state increases over time, the rebel force will necessarily require more resources and participants if the conflict is going to continue. Such is not necessarily a proportional increase as, unlike the state, they have tools of war such as extreme violence and kidnapping, that can be used to magnify the perceived strength of the unit. In states like Uganda where international assistance and an increase in state strength is evident over the course of the conflict, the hypothesis that rebel greed motivates the duration of war seems inadequate and yet retains its dominance in the discourse on civil war.

The literature was originally so persuasive because it drastically reinterpreted our understanding of what drives civil war. Prior to the development of the greed theory of war, the mobilization of pre-existing social linkages like ethnicity, religion, or language groups overcame collective action costs. Because our understanding of war was linked to permanent socio-political characteristics, war was not a rational decision and, therefore, difficult to address from a policy standpoint. Ethnic hatreds were seen as primordial conflicts rather than distributional issues. Since the publication of “On Economic Causes of Civil War” in 1998, however, many in

the discipline have re-examined their original conclusions that pure greed motivates the desire to go to war. Instead, they suggested that the effect of primary commodities is overstated by the existence of a few extreme cases and that Collier and Hoeffler's interpretation of primary commodity significance was flawed ((Ross; 2004, Fearon; 2004, Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore;(2005).

Collier, Hoeffler, and Soderbom examine war duration explicitly, as they assert that peace and civil war are persistent states and so we cannot assume that the same factors that contribute to the initiation of civil conflict also make it probable for the conflict to persist. They find that the share of primary commodity exports is not significant in explaining duration, but where average income is low or inequality is high, wars persist. This is consistent with our understanding of individual motivations to participate in conflict; where the perceived opportunity costs are low and selective benefits are available to participants, followers are more likely to be willing to continue fighting.

Michael Ross (2004) advocates the disaggregation of the measure of primary commodity resources because the division of resources into specific groups (legal versus non-legal or agricultural versus mineral) affords researchers a more nuanced understanding of the role of primary commodities in the onset and termination of conflict. Finally, Ross asks the question: which way does the causal arrow go? He is skeptical of the overall use of resource driven models because of the absence of a clear causal mechanism (Ross; 2004). The example of Angola illustrates that manufacturing and service industry jobs flee from the threat of conflict, thereby changing the dynamics of the domestic market and allowing scholars like Collier and Hoeffler to overestimate the effect of prior economic conditions. James Fearon (2004), alternatively, asserts that the significance of primary commodities in the model is driven by the

inclusion of oil. According to Fearon, rather than a matter of rapacity, a greater dependence on oil and commodities is the trademark of a rentier and, by definition, weak state. Primary commodities thus become a proxy for state capacity rather than an economic motivator or the successful appropriation of lootable resources. As Fearon defines the importance of primary commodities, he shows that conflicts over lootable resources are the longest lasting wars. This can be explained as both a failure of the state to respond adequately to the rebellion and also as a consistent resource that can be exploited by rebel leaders to prevent defection. Further, Walter suggests that rather than a matter of lootable resources, onset and duration are tied primarily to the standard of living prior to the conflict. She concludes that when opportunity costs for joining and continuing a conflict remain low, we can expect an enduring conflict.

### State Capacity Literature

The second theoretical path in the literature is the scholarship that proposes state capacity<sup>4</sup> is the key factor in understanding civil war duration. These scholars imply that the solution to curtailing civil war duration is to improve the capacity of the state, but as some like Jeff Herbst note, it may be a matter of too few resources too late. Herbst (2004) examined the escalation of insurgencies in Africa and found two stages. In the initial stage of the conflict,

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<sup>4</sup> Most notably Weber defines military capacity as the state's ability to deter or repel challenges to its authority with force (Weber; 1919). Cullen Hendrix divides the methods of defining state capacity or the ability to repress/ defeat threats to state dominance into three categories: military capacity, bureaucratic administrative capacity, and the quality and coherence of political institutions (Hendrix; 2010). Military capacity address the ability of the state to put boots and supplies into the field while bureaucratic and administrative efficiency refers to the ability of the state to collect and process information . Lastly the quality and coherence of institutions refers to the degree to which democratic and non-democratic features are intermingled in the political system. The coherence of political institutions is most frequently measured by the Polity2 Score which measures the degree to which a state is authoritarian or democratic. Bureaucratic efficiency is represented by Acemoglu, Johnson & Robinson (2001) by the PRSG's "risk of expropriation and repudiation of government contracts" measure while Collier and Hoeffler (2004) alternatively use primary commodity exports as a share of GDP as a proxy as they contend that rentier states fundamentally fail to develop effective state structures because they derive their resources from export taxes rather than individual taxes. Finally military capacity is defined as both military personal per capita and military spending as a percentage of GDP which captures the increase in resource mobilization and ability of the state to address armed threats to its own dominance. In this study I will incorporate all measures into my assessment and construction of my theory as all three measures enrich our understanding of the power and reach of the formal state.

insurgencies are small and easy to put down with minimal, but effective, state intervention; as time passes, however, and insurgencies gain strength, states will require a higher degree of state mobilization. He notes that because poor state organization and insufficient institutions so hinder the ability to respond quickly in states with limited resources, the chances of being able to address the insurgency erode considerably after the beginning of the conflict. Herbst's central theory (2004) is that when the state capacity is stretched, the state will become more unlikely to expend sufficient resource and/ or political capital to address the rebellion. Buhaug et al (2009) mirror this concern, but proxy challenges to state capacity by coding the "absolute" and "relative" distances to the conflict from the epicenter of government. The absolute distance measures the actual distance the military must project power in order to engage rebel forces and the relative distance measures the geographic impediments to the projection of power such as forests, rough terrain, and whether or not the conflict is in a non-contiguous territory. The authors find these indicators are significant in conflict duration. Their conclusions on the impact of terrain are mirrored in the findings of Collier and Hoeffler in their most recent study on civil war duration. (2001) As the distance between the stronghold of government and the conflict widens, states must invest greater resources; as their military capacity is diminished, their ability to strike decisively is limited. Fearon (2004) proposes a similar typology that differentiates "peripheral insurgencies" from all others and acknowledges that these distant conflicts pose less of a challenge to state function and are more difficult to address and are therefore longer than popular revolutions or anti-colonial wars that have the strictly stated goals of capturing the power of the central government. Finally, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) use bureaucratic efficiency and military size as their indicators of state capacity. Their argument is that an effective bureaucracy will reduce the chances of a rebel victory as the state can then more efficiently address rebel

groups. Counter-intuitively, they conclude that an effective bureaucracy does not increase a government's chances of victory. DeRouen and Sobek attribute this to regime type; democracies are less willing to strike decisive blows to a smaller opponent than are their authoritarian counterparts. In addition, they conclude that a stronger military only marginally increases the state's ability to achieve victory. In short, prior theory has concluded that the more difficult it is to project effective state authority into a section of territory either because of geographic or (state) organizational impediments, the more difficult it is to end civil wars.

State capacity literature is well suited to answer the question of why states cannot unilaterally end a conflict when their resources are limited, but is ill-fitted for conflicts in which the state has not only grown in terms of capacity but also has an abundance of international resources from which to draw aid with limited pressure to end the conflict. DeRouen and Sobek conclude that in conflicts in which the United Nations intervenes, there is a higher likelihood of a negotiated settlement but they suggest that the United Nations only intervenes in conflicts that are severely protracted or particularly violent. In their model, UN intervention represents international pressure to end conflicts even at the disadvantage of both rebels and the government of Uganda, where there is a steady growth rate and consistent international interest in development and military aid, seems to contradict all of the relevant findings on state capacity.

### Commitment Issue Literature

The perspective of the third theoretical camp, which privileges the commitment issues that arise out of fear, a lack of trust between parties, and the competing political goals of the parties, is useful in explaining why rebels remain committed to the conflict rather than to peace initiatives and is, therefore, important for my argument. As in most questions in conflict studies, however, while there are many variables that contribute to any outcome, as scientists, our task is



to find the root determinants of duration and so I suggest a reinterpretation of the goals of both the government and rebel forces.

The causes of commitment issues named in the literature are diverse and address the problems in ending conflict faced by rebel leadership even once they have reached a “hurting stalemate”. (Zartman; 2001) Generally, in the literature, a highly fractionalized society has not been found to be significantly correlated with civil war onset (Fearon and Laitin; 2004; Collier; 2001). Not so with duration. Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom conclude that societies that score a 50 on the Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization Index (ELF)<sup>5</sup> are likely to experience substantially longer wars. Their conclusion is supported by Doyle and Sambanis’ observation that “wars with an ethnic or religious overtone are less likely to be resolved (Doyle and Sambanis 2000: 786). Shanna Kirshner (2007), on the other hand, advocates the examination of the mechanisms linking ethnicity and conflict and she tests the implications of discriminatory policies and identification of the “other” as well as the previous interaction of the two parties by including a measure for atrocities in a Cox hazard model of duration. All of her primary variables- easily identifiable ethnically organized rebels, a history of conflict between the combatants, atrocities during the war, and segregation - are significant in the extension of civil war. Her findings revitalize the discourse of identity in conflict and underscore the role of the international community as a credible negotiator. Where inter-group trust is low, identity, and specifically historical identity conflict in society is key to understanding why people fight. Adding support to Kirshner’s conclusion that ethnicity and identity do matter, Jose Montalvo (2010) postulates that the degree of ethnic heterogeneity at the outset of conflict is not a sufficient indicator for civil war duration because it fails to capture the degree of distrust between groups. A diverse

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<sup>5</sup> A 50 on the ELF index categorizes a society as what Collier calls a dominant society. These states have one dominant majority group with a number of victimized minority groups.

population through which resources and rights are equitably distributed and with a standing tradition of acceptance will not erupt into civil war. He theorizes that where tension over resource distribution or extreme marginalization exists, groups will be more willing to fight to win. He concludes that countries with a high degree of ethnic polarization at the onset of conflict experience longer wars than those with a less polarized and more inclusive political environment despite the degree of fractionalization of the population.

The role of international interveners in domestic conflict is ill defined since conflicting results exist in the literature. Cunningham (2006) theorizes that the higher the number of veto players in a conflict including both domestic and international actors, the lower the chance of resolving the conflict because each player has a specific agenda and, when the agendas are diametrical, the pool of acceptable resolutions is greatly diminished. When international backers become veto players in domestic conflicts, therefore, they may hurt rather than help. Balch-Lindsey and Enterline (2000), alternatively, find that military intervention on the part of third parties decreases the duration of the conflict by providing added support to the state to end the conflict. Recent case studies would suggest that external interventions tend to exacerbate the conflict such as in Sudan, Angola, or the Democratic Republic of Congo; the literature offers contradictory conclusions when scholars consider cases like Bosnia in the early 1990s and Rwanda in 1994 where external intervention was instrumental in finding peace (Crocker et al; 2005).

This review of the literature carefully outlines the controversy in the scholarship but also highlights the primacy of the rebel faction as a decisive actor in conflict duration. Economic determinants of duration suggest that rebels make calculations based on access to resources; identity theories suggest that rebel factions can most easily maintain mobilization along ethnic

lines, making ethnicity the theoretical center of the conflict. The literature never articulates that the perpetuation of conflict could be politically useful for the existing state, so in cases like Uganda, where the central government has high capacity because it is underwritten by international non-profits and bilateral and multilateral aid, the continuance of conflict is baffling.

The inability to explain the war in Uganda highlights a crucial gap in the literature. By focusing on the deliberations of the rebel group, we imply that conflict duration is solely a function of their understanding of the costs and benefits of continued insurrection. By not examining the calculations of the state, we make simplifying assumptions about the goals and preferences of the state being static across all cases that for many states may not be valid. These assumptions stem from the canonical literature on social contracts and the role of the government. John Locke asserted that when citizens enter into a social contract, they surrender some of their freedoms in exchange for security (Locke, 2003). Locke's concept of social contracts had obligations on the part of the citizen and the state that were mutually binding, and failure by either party had consequences. Adam Smith defined the roles of government as the provision of public goods, justice, and security (Smith, 1991).

### Uganda

The research that focuses exclusively on the war in Northern Uganda concludes that the war is motivated by issues centered on ethnicity, religion, or leadership (read Joseph Kony as insane). I will outline the prominent literature on each explanation and conclude with an evaluation of the literature based on its utility in the case of Uganda and then in the broader context of civil war literature.

By far the most prevalent explanation of the conflict in Uganda is what Rosa Ehrenreich (1998) terms the "insanity theory." This explanation of why the war lasts is particularly popular

in the international media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the local population as part of what Svenker Finnstrom (2006) terms the “official discourse”; this has also become the underlying explanation for a significant portion of the research from the academic community as well. The image of the LRA as an apolitical force embodied in Joseph Kony is derived from the LRA’s use of violence against its own people or source of domestic political support. Robert Gersony contends in his article “The Anguish of Northern Uganda” (1997), that the most brutal acts by the LRA are “indiscriminate,” and, when carried out, “the attacking forces demonstrate callous indifference and the unnecessary infliction of death in the course of operations which are of little military consequence.”(44) He concludes that the LRA’s use of violence has no guiding principles or desire to foster political support. Instead, it is driven by the bizarre leadership rather than legitimate political aims. Supporting Gersony’s interpretation of the conflict, Doom and Vlassenroot (1999) argue that while the LRA may have initially formed with political goals, after the 1994 rejection by the Acholi leadership of the LRA as an agent of Acholi grievances, Kony became a “mad Max” and the “violence has become both a tool and an end in itself.” Gerard Prunier suggests the LRA has political motivation but that it is not internal to the organization. He argues that Kony is a “mad man” but that the LRA serves the political goals of the Bashir government of Sudan rather than having an intrinsic set of goals (2004). Prunier’s argument has been largely undermined (or at least mooted) by the 1999 agreement between the government of Sudan and the government of Uganda to stop funding each other’s oppositional insurgencies and to share intelligence to drive the LRA out of both Uganda and Sudan.

The International Crisis Group dismisses any legitimate political motivations of the LRA based on the severity of civilian brutality even though they do acknowledge that official statements and speeches by the LRA often evoke Acholi nationalism, government discrimination

against the Acholi and the failure to protect the Northern residents against cattle losses after the war in the 1980s (ICG; 2004). I do not intend to defend the actions or tactics of the LRA nor is my aim to ascribe political motivations that are only tangentially associated with the actions of the group to the leadership and followers; however, suggestions that the violence of the LRA is driven by madness strips the group of rationality as well as political motivations.

The relationship between the LRA and the Northern population will be the focus in section six but here I point to the cases in which the LRA has used violence. Symbolic acts of violence such as the disfigurement of civilians or the removal of limbs almost always targets those that are reported to be government collaborators or informants and are clearly intended to send a message to the Northern population (Dolan;2009). Further attacks on villages and camps are usually reported as attempts to collect food or new “recruits” to pad the LRA’s ranks to mitigate the enormous attrition rate. At the outset of the conflict, the political motivations of the rebellion were much clearer cut, given the support of the Acholi community and Northern population more generally, but after the 1994 formal and public rejection of the LRA by Acholi religious and political leaders, violence appears to have become a tool of survival rather than the communication of political goals or a concerted effort at taking over the government (Finnstrom; 2006). In the case study, I more fully detail the position of the LRA in domestic politics in relation to the government and the inclusion of the International Criminal Court, making their use of violence, not necessarily political, but certainly rational.

A second theoretical track pursued in the existing literature is that the LRA is driven by a fanatical religious conviction that informs its actions. Scholars are hard pressed to identify which theological tradition motivates the LRA because Joseph Kony has become a religious bricoleur, cobbling together all the religious traditions he encountered in order to play on the

fears and ignorance of his troops. Bob Drogin asserts that the LRA is a "... fanatic Christian fundamentalist cult led by a self-proclaimed prophet with a murderous manner" (1996). Frank van Acker (2004) claims that the emergence and transformation of the LRA must be understood in relation to the fall of the preceding rebellion the Holy Spirit movement. The current rebellion can be understood as a continuation of the goals of Alice Auma Lakwena who was the leader of the HSM dedicated to cleansing both the Acholi and the greater Uganda of the stains of war through the use of a mix of Christian and traditional beliefs. He maintains that "it would be a mistake to dismiss out of hand the force of the rebels' beliefs," and goes on to explain:

"...the LRA sees its struggle against the government of Uganda as a divine cause that is being directed and guided by God through his prophet Kony, indicated by the importance of supporting rituals and the transcendent moralism justifying wholesale acts of violence (as opposed to the conventional principle of secular terrorism of using the minimum force necessary), and the ritual intensity with which these acts are committed." (Van Acker; 2004)

By using religious conviction as the motivating force behind the LRA's actions, Van Acker explains that the motivations of the groups are not, in fact, meant to be political but primarily religious and social. This theory addresses the goals of the group but artificially extends the convictions of the leadership to the bulk of the group which, given the attrition rate, is difficult to maintain. If those in the LRA were uniformly faithful to the religious goals of the group, they would likely display the characteristics of other religiously motivated militia or terrorist groups, who demand complete devotion to the religious convictions of the group and historically have been more disciplined and programmatic in their actions than has been the LRA.

Finally, the role of ethnic tensions and the history of ethnic divisions in Uganda are prevalent in any discussion of the Ugandan conflict. Sverker Finnstrom has cited the written manifestos and camp speeches made in the protected villages of the government where LRA leadership has demanded the political integration of the Acholi, reparations for lost cattle and an end to the “genocide of the Acholi.” (Finnstrom; 2006) Other scholars such as Kasozi and Okalany attribute the conflict to the continued failure of the government to direct resources for development to the North and the excessive centralization of political power of the multi-ethnic Uganda to the southern ethnic groups, with the most notable example being Yoweri Museveni himself (Kasozi; 1994). They suggest that the LRA represents the grievances of the Acholi people and, therefore, the war will necessarily continue until the government pursues a more multi-ethnic principle and addresses the concerns of the Acholi people.

A call for integration is echoed by Ali Mazrui’s analysis of the conflict. Mazrui (1975) acknowledges the ethnic tensions in Uganda are indeed part of the broader political discourse but cites the failure to diversify the military as the single most destructive decision of the historical political leadership of Uganda leading to two significant consequences. The first is that the military is a constant representation of the ethnic division in the country and the military presence in Acholiland is seen as a foreign occupation. The second consequence is the use of the military by political leaders to promote their own political and private goals by rallying support from their own ethnic group within the military. This analysis of the situation in Uganda is correct in its presentation of the stark ethnic tensions in Uganda but misrepresents the role of the Acholi people as a uniquely marginalized people, the ethnic homogeneity of the rebel forces, and, finally, does not include the role of abduction in the continued rebel movement. Scholars often reference the historical discrimination that began in the colonial period under the British

divide and rule strategy split Uganda into two sections, grouping the Acholi, Lango, Karamojong, and Iteso as peoples used for labor for the more productive south (Fredrick; 2009). This division has lasted into post-colonial politics but while the exclusion of the Acholi from government positions is part of the rhetoric of the rebel leadership, Acholi leadership has squarely rejected the LRA. Accounts of Acholis leaving the camp to follow the rebels back to their camps with offerings of food and supplies are rare and do more to highlight the difficult position of the Acholi people who must decide whether to support a movement that conscripted their sons and daughters or reject the movement and thus reject their family members. Additionally, because of the high instance of forced participation, the LRA is not an ethnically homogenous rebellion nor are the recruits willing participants. This is crucial in understanding the position of the rebels and the determinants of the war duration because while Kony himself is Acholi, his movement has been openly rejected by the traditional leadership of the Acholi as well as by the average Acholi as demonstrated by the low levels of willing participation. Evidence from Uganda suggests that, although ethnic conflict was indeed an indicator of civil war onset, it is not sufficient as the planation of what makes this war durable. By surveying both case specific and more general literature on civil war, I clearly indicate the gaps in the existing literature caused by a pre-formulated interpretation of the events in Uganda and assert that the incentive structure constructed by international aid conditions, weak democratic institutions, and tangential links between the state and citizen lead politicians to allow conflict to continue to maintain political power and limit threats to regime change.



## LIMITS OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

The existing literature on the democratic state makes a number of assumptions about the relationship between citizen and state that are challenged by modern polity. International assistance and conflict fundamentally change the preferences of the state to deemphasize the importance of collective security. This section will challenge unexamined assumptions and discuss their implications for civil war duration. Historically, colonial rule created a culture of neglect in which states could afford to be unresponsive to their citizenry. Modern aid regimes have reconstructed this system by breaking the links of accountability between state survival and the willing participation of the population. Because the longevity of the regime is not determined exclusively by the fulfillment of the needs of the domestic constituencies, I argue that even in democracies, in the hierarchy of preferences, peace and security may not always be the primary goal of the state in light of the goals and preferences of individual politicians as rational actors. Further, because the state can reasonably expect to survive small scale civil conflict with the help of international assistance, we should not assume that a threat to a portion of a state's population constitutes a threat to the state.

I conclude with an overview of the ways in which low level conflict in an aid-rich environment can actually be politically useful for insulating elected officials from the demands of the population. The division of the population into pro-government and oppositional groups allows the government to limit the provision of public services to those who do not pose a threat to political tenure. This confluence of conflict and assistance creates a space for the allocation of resources to the military and helps secure easier terms in aid negotiation for states facing such conflict. Essentially an aid-rich environment and civil conflict create an "amount" of conflict

that is acceptable and even politically useful, thus impeding the active and committed search for peace.

There are two fundamental theoretical assumptions that condition our understanding of governance and democracy in the world. The first is the assumption that politicians are rational self-interested actors that will engage only in those actions that will prolong their political tenure (Buchanan and Tullock; 1979). The second is that representative governments are founded upon a social contract between society and state where all people are created equal and willingly surrender their ability to enforce the natural law as individuals in exchange for security, and in which the state acts as the protector of its population from both external and internal threats (Locke, 2003). Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations* (1991), expanded this theory to identify the three responsibilities of the state as the provision of justice, defense, and public goods to citizens because private citizens were either unwilling or incapable of providing these for themselves. Of these two assumptions, in post-colonial states only one holds, which affects the strategies used by politicians to achieve their goals. No matter the system, politicians will act to maintain political power. Buchanan and Tullock (1979) have hypothesized that political survival is the primary objective for politicians who cannot be seen simply as “platonic guardians” of the public good.

The social contract that exists between citizen and state, however, does not exist in those states that accepted the existing colonial power structure after independence. This absence in these states is a result of the method of government construction in colonial possessions. In colonial states, governments were borne of conquest and domination by foreign actors rather than of collective action by the domestic population. Crawford Young (1997), uses the Kikongo words “Bula Matari” or the crusher of rocks to describe the colonial state as he asserts that

colonial rule was based on a system of vicious extraction by colonial officials which had a transformative impact on the nature of the state by breaking the link between citizen and state. Representatives of Colonial governments, because they were not beholden to the domestic population for their political survival, structured the government with the intention of insulating themselves from the needs and demands of the native population. Post-colonial political elites adopted this structure and character but adapted it to the fact that now, their fortunes were attached to a domestic constituency. After independence in most former colonies, what Goran Hyden (2005) called “movement politics” were an effort to build national unity, but most of these attempts to build consensus among the disparate and conflicting social groups were discarded as the administration lost any economic incentive because of the injection of foreign capital. When the state requires input of resources and trust from the whole populace in order to function, we see efforts to engage the entire population.

Charles Tilly (1990) describes this process of state building in the creation of European nation states. External threats obliged feudal governments to levy taxes on their citizens and compel them to service in the military and in exchange, rulers provided security and other public goods with the resources extracted from the population. This system of state creation required all people to provide resources and in turn meant that all people expected benefits from the state. In post-colonial states, on the other hand, the administration was never challenged to protect its borders and therefore never developed the capacity to extend power across its territory; instead, it concentrated all of the government capacity and power on the area surrounding the seat of political power, the capital city. This strategy of rule, regardless of the ethno-religious tensions that exist in a country, create a core and a marginalized constituency within the population. The marginalized population is comprised of those people who live farthest from the capital; the core

constituency is those people who enjoy state services, and protections as they live close enough to the capital that the resources required for service provision remain minimal (Herbst; 2000). Political elites seek to appease the core constituency because spatially they pose the greatest challenge to government function. A rebellion at the edges of the capital city poses a significantly greater chance of halting state function and doing physical harm to elected officials and domestic power players than one at the remote border (Fearon; 2004). Politicians, out of necessity, focus their resources primarily on those people who pose the greatest threat.

Because this system of accountability and stewardship does not, like a social contract, connect the electoral success of individual politicians to the success of the national population but to specific sectors of the population, two other assumptions about the relationship between people and the state and the preferences of the state in democratic or semi-democratic countries cannot hold. I will present and then discuss the importance of these assumptions.

- a.) Democracies are less prone to internal violence and, in the event of rebellion, the government will seek to end the conflict as quickly as possible to protect the interests of its population and retain political influence.
- b.) If violence persists in a democratic state, the cause is some characteristic of the rebel unit rather than of the state, as the political life of elites is predicated on their ability to protect the population.

Skocpol and Goodwin theorized that democracies should be able to better address grievances and work towards negotiated settlement, increasing the likelihood of a negotiated settlement in war because it is in the best interest of politicians to end conflict quickly while preserving their domestic constituencies (1984). I argue, however, that in the absence of a social contract between political elites and the entire population and the presence of consistent

international assistance (military, developmental, and humanitarian), states can effectively discount the demands of the affected population as long as the conflict does not threaten key constituencies in the domestic center of political gravity, the capital. With the injection of foreign capital, the international community in effect becomes an external constituency that, because of the administration's dependence on its financial contribution, carries enormous political weight domestically. Historically, structural adjustment programs have been used to shift the preferences of the state; states have been forced to make cuts to social spending in order to receive the loans. By interceding between the primary domestic constituency and the government, international aid is recreating the conditions that were present in colonial administrations when politicians could ostensibly ignore the demands of the population because the fortunes of political figures were not tied exclusively to the public evaluation of politicians' performance domestically. This point is crucial for understanding the duration of civil war because if the preferences of the state can be shifted to privilege the goals of an alternative constituency, we can assume that the state will not always pursue policies that are best suited for its population.

A second constituency that can intercede between the domestic population and the national government in semi-democratic states is the military. Where civilian control of the military is not a foregone conclusion, research suggests that governments will allocate more resources to defense budgets rather than to social programs or fiscal control policies (Collier and Hoeffler; 2006). Currently in Africa, ten out of 54 incumbent governments are headed by the leaders of coups (For a list of leaders and countries please see Appendix A). This does not even address incumbent leaders that were rebel leaders who emerged from the military. Post-colonial African leadership, even in countries where there has been significant time since a coup attempt,

is acutely aware of the threat posed by the military and therefore the military itself become a separate constituency with needs for resources that cannot be deferred, even with the intercession of the international community into domestic politics.

Once we accept the argument that states preferences can be shifted depending on the actors that hold power in domestic decision-making, we can also argue that even in democracies, in the hierarchy of preferences, peace and security may not always be the primary goal of the state, given what we know about the goals and preferences of individual politicians. Common knowledge in democratic theory, as shown by Skocpol and Goodwin's assessment of democracy and conflict, is that peace is always preferable to conflict and that democracies are better suited to address conflict. This hypothesis supposes that the preference for peace is an "increasing preference" where values of A, in this case "peace", are always less desirable. But in the context of the incentive structure created when international aid and low level conflict are both present in a political environment, peace – for politicians - becomes a single peaked preference. Single peaked preferences represent commodities where the ideal value of A is such that with values less than A more is preferred but in values greater than A less is preferred. On a scale that represents the degrees of peace ranging from 0 to 1 where zero represents all out war and 1 represents complete peace, in the political environment where international aid and some conflict is present, peace is not the ideal preference for the state as there are additional benefits that are available from some value of conflict greater than .5 but less than 1.

The interactive effects of low-level peripheral conflict and international assistance work to insulate political elites from their constituencies in three key ways:

1. In low-level peripheral conflict, the domestic constituency is divided into the affected and core constituencies, where the core constituency is those people who live closest to

the center of government power and can expect to maintain influence of the decision making of the state. The affected constituency, because it places high demands on the sitting government but is often perceived to be in opposition to the sitting government given the presence of the rebel forces is politically marginalized without direct action by the state, reducing the ability of oppositional groups to develop viable political leadership and/or organize politically to support existing oppositional candidates.

2. In low level, peripheral conflicts, the military can be warehoused farther away from the center of political power and resources can be legitimately allocated to defense budgets to appease senior officers and loosely controlled predation on the part of junior officers and enlisted men can be tolerated as the constituencies most affected are either neighboring states or the communities affected by war.
3. Conflict, even low- level peripheral conflict can help secure easier terms in aid negotiation for states facing such conflict. International conditions on assistance can be challenged, and if not completely disregarded, at least modified to remove some of the conditions set by international lenders and donors. Active conflict provides political cover for the allocation of resources to the military as well as for the unequal distribution of funds marked for social security spending and development.

In short, the interactive effect of low level peripheral conflict and international aid changes the dynamics of domestic power relationships between the three key constituencies of semi-democratic states and the state by empowering the state *domestically* as a field marshal responsible for directing the military and deciding which parts of the populations receive the protection of the state its population and *internationally* by providing the political cover necessary when the states shirks the conditions placed on loans and aid in the name of

emergency politics. In this situation then, civil war is a tool that can be used by savvy politicians to insulate themselves both domestically and internationally from political challenge. Here though, I do not contend that politicians willingly start civil wars or fund them to achieve these conditions but only that once a conflict has begun, there are fewer incentives to bring it to an end. Conflict will continue as long as the cost of ending civil war remains higher than the benefits received from allowing it to continue.



## **THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS**

Given the above theory of state preferences, we can expect to see some strategies, such as the extension of conflict, employed by politicians in order to maintain power that in functional democracies would not be acceptable political decisions given politicians' direct link to a broader domestic constituency. In institutionalized democracies, where limits on the power of the central government are respected and elections actually do serve the purpose of punishing or rewarding politicians for performance, politicians do not have the political cover to allow this sort of conflict without losing their posts. In countries where low level peripheral conflict is ongoing, the resources required to end the conflict are calculated to be higher than those required to maintain but restrict conflict.

In this section I discuss the ways that low level peripheral conflict can be politically useful when managing the expectations and requirements of each of the key constituencies and also suggest ways that, if so inclined, key actors can work to shift the preferences of states towards peace. In this project I define a constituency as "A group served by an organization or institution; a clientele" (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000) rather than simply the voting population of a district or state. The use of a broader definition is required here to include those groups necessary for politicians to attain, and subsequently maintain, political office. In countries where it retains its independence, the military can pose significant threat to the elected leadership. If elected officials do not have the support of the military, they open themselves to both intragovernmental and extra governmental challenges that increase the likelihood of violent regime change. Finally, the international donor community is the last key constituency for domestic politicians.

In countries that depend on the injection of foreign capital to stay afloat, the maintenance of goodwill in the international donor community is vital for the survival of domestic politicians. Loans and assistance not only ensure the continuance of basic state functions but they often provide the capital necessary to maintain circles of patronage within the population. If domestic leaders cannot garner the support of the international donor community or allocate funds from the extraction of high rent primary commodities, they have little to offer their public. Savvy politicians understand that when they lose international support, they open themselves to domestic political challenge. Examples of leaders who have recognized the need to advocate for their political tenure with all three key constituencies exist in Africa, but the longevity statistics on African leaders are still startling: as of 1991 59.4% of African leaders had been killed, imprisoned, or exiled as a consequence of holding political office (Wiseman, 1993). This is not a consequence, William Reno notes, of the corruption of African leaders, but a sign that the leader had lost control of the political opposition or rival strongmen in their country and became vulnerable to political challenge and subsequent removal (Reno; 1999).

### *State- International Community Relations*

The first set of actors that place restrictions on the activities of the state is the foreign constituency that is comprised of donor countries and international financial institutions that assess future loans based on the ability of a country to fulfill the obligations that are part and parcel of foreign capital investment. An important way to frame the connection between domestic and international politics involves Putnam's notion of the "two-level game," a general equilibrium theory that posits the simultaneous interaction of domestic and international events that shape decision-making (Putnam, 1988). Putnam's game theory is applied generally to the negotiation and ratification of international treaties. In this case, domestic leadership is

simultaneously using domestic conflict as political excuse for why previous conditions and goals set by international donors have not been met, while using the promise of international aid as a method of domestic pacification by promising his key domestic constituents expanded access to resources on the condition that they continue to support him politically. Generally, researchers use two level game theory when explaining the negotiation of new international treaties. In this case, the model is useful in explaining the negotiating strategies domestic politicians engage in to rally support for themselves as leaders and to solidify their position with their key domestic and international constituencies.

Distinguishing between international assistance and the international community that comprises one of the constituencies of the state is important. International aid is non-agentic and is part of a political strategy of domestic constituent management while the international community has interests and preferences with which domestic leaders must contend. Because post-colonial states initially had no impetus to construct state tax structures that could provide a dependable capital stream, elected officials either had to improve extractive capacity or find capital elsewhere. Without capital to allocate to those constituencies whose favor is necessary to maintain power, politicians cannot expect to retain political office

International assistance injects the capital that domestic politicians need to retain the political support of key constituencies, as it is essentially a disposable resource. Although conditions for international aid often stipulate that the funds be spent on development projects, the money is funneled through state apparatuses that can redirect the funds and the portions that do get invested in development can be targeted at the portions of the population a politician needs. Unlike primary commodities that are location specific “rents” that can be captured by rebel units and endanger the function of the state, international assistance is easily defensible.

Rebel threats to its resource base cannot, therefore, be used to pressure the central government to end the war. International aid also insulates the state and its primary constituencies from the negative externalities of war such as economic decline in war-affected areas, the destruction of infrastructure, and loss of life.

International donors and financial institutions shape political decision making in two key ways: by using political and economic pressure to force the state to account for the allocation of international funds and, by providing legitimacy for leaders through both immaterial and material support that shapes the perceptions of domestic populations. When their regime lacks legitimacy within their own populations, political leaders can assign credit for negotiations for new international aid and foreign investment contracts to their administration. But when rulers are seeking to effect the decision making process of international donors, they can present the needs of their constituency or current events such as conflicts, famines, or other emergencies as a method of shedding the restrictions placed on spending or economic decisions. This ability to play the domestic and international constituencies against each other frees politicians to use the resources of the state for personal objectives. In the following section, I discuss the ways in which we can expect international assistance and peripheral conflicts to affect the nature of the relationships between the state and key actors in domestic politics: the military and domestic population.

### *Civil-State Relations*

In a democratic system, politicians are the empowered agents of the population and, therefore, as representatives of the wishes and preferences of the majority of the population. With appropriate checks and balances on government actions, minority rights will be respected and incorporated into the policy goals of the state. This vision of a properly functioning

democracy is predicated on two assumptions: that representatives are placed in government as direct representatives of their constituencies and that the preferences of all voters are represented. The state, functioning as an interest aggregator, should produce policies with which all people are unequally happy (or unhappy) and if politicians do not adequately represent the interests of their voting constituencies, those that feel excluded from the decision-making may use their vote to punish politicians. If politicians with national voting constituencies want to maintain political power, they should consider the preferences of the population and try to represent a moderate position that does not disproportionately disadvantage any part of the population (Downs; 1957) .

In post-colonial semi-democratic states, however, the incentive structure that encourages equal representation and curbs the individualistic use of political power is much weaker. The “degree of democracy” experienced by individuals is conditioned by two factors: the cost of providing constituents with public goods paid by political elites and the buffer mechanisms available to politicians that limit the ability of voters to evaluate the policy decision of politicians and either punish or reward them. Jeffrey Herbst provides examples of three mechanisms used by politicians used to insulate themselves from the demands of the population. A low-level peripheral conflict added to the political environment accomplishes the same goal of limiting the participation of domestic oppositional forces by marginalizing certain portions of the population. This section will discuss the conditions that lead to a political situation in which the provision of public security is not a rational action for politicians and explain how the addition of conflict into this political environment can be politically useful and , more importantly, that the benefits of ending conflict are lesser than the disadvantages of allowing it to continue.

Jeffrey Herbst argues that a theory of state consolidation is necessary apart from the traditionally Eurocentric models for state consolidation based on conquest<sup>6</sup>. To achieve this goal, he identifies three determinants of strong state consolidation: the cost of extending power, the nature of state boundaries or “buffer mechanisms”, and the pressures of the interstate system. He defines the *costs of power projection* in African states as the dispersion of the population over the land, the amount of capital necessary, and the ecological factors that would facilitate or deter expansion; *buffer mechanisms* are policies or boundaries that mitigate pressures from external actors on the state and lower the cost of power projection (25). Herbst's examples of these mechanisms include fixed national boundaries and citizenship and migration policies.

The state structure inherited by post-colonial leaders of semi-democratic states was particularly limited. Colonial leadership did not intend to provide state services to the entire population and therefore did not extend the reach of the state past the core of the country which they used as a clearing house for colonial products and a base for the colonial administration. Treatment by the state and resources allocated to individuals were functions of their affiliation with the colonial regime. Those who were privileged during the regime had personal connections with the colonial administrators or had enough domestic power that they could garner influence.

After independence, the system of politics and governance in these states did not change. Those with direct access to political elites had the greatest access to the bounty of the state. This method of governance is what Goran Hyden calls the “economy of affection” Favours are traded for political support because the very limited role for the diffuse support of democracy or any administration creates a more pragmatic view of government. Max Weber describes this type of

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<sup>6</sup> Discussed above- See Tilly, Charles (1990). *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, Mass., USA: B. Blackwell

system as a patrimonial rule where power is personalized and therefore the activities of the state become an extension of a leader's personal beneficence. He describes the political administration as a "purely personal affair of the ruler, and the political power is considered part of his personal property" Further, "the office and the exercise of public authority serve the ruler and the official on which the office was bestowed; they do not serve impersonal purposes." (Weber; 1968)

When international assistance is added to this system, elected officials essentially become super-patrons as their access to resources is unparalleled by non-governmental elites.

Theoretically, this would encourage patrons to expand their circles of patronage to include more of the population but this will occur only if new sectors of the population have the ability to threaten or reward politicians. Political leaders, recognizing that resources are finite will only use their power when they perceive that the exercise of that power will improve either their personal status or their chances of maintaining access to the power and resources of the state.

This is supported by Hyden's (2005) analysis of the relationship between state and society as the "problematic state" in Africa. He examines the role of the community in nascent states after colonialism, concluding that colonial leaders saw the community as a hurdle to overcome for effective management of the colony. After independence, domestic community leaders that had previously been subjected to the absolutist rule of the state took over the task of governance but because they had had no ties to the construction of the official state during the colonial era but which was accepted structurally by post-independence political leaders, they treated it as prey rather than a mechanism of political management. Hyden also concludes that the state is "embedded" in society or subject to the whims of social linkages rather than rule bound and above society. He fails to consider, however, that relative and actual distance of the central government from certain segments of the population is much more dramatic; varying

degrees of connectivity exist among the population and elites. Therefore, while his analysis of the motivations of politicians is astute the conclusion as to what that means regarding a politician's relationship with the population is flawed given the nature of state administrations in Africa.

Herbst's (2000) description of the failure to extend the state means that the state rarely directly interacts with populations outside of urban centers, creating a subordinate area that is isolated geographically and politically from the power center. The subordinate area exists outside the control of the state and without the benefits of public goods provided by the state; this marginalized population has little incentive or ability to participate in the larger state economy and feels minimal loyalty to the distant state. This limited loyalty is mirrored by national leaders as they are not inclined to spend their political resources on a population that is only tangentially associated with their ability to maintain political power.

The method of state access is crucial in this analysis of state-civil relations because not only does it define how individuals gain access to state resources but ,more importantly, how people are excluded from access to the state and what motivates politicians to provide for certain sectors of the population over others. If Buchanan and Tullock's supposition about the motivations of politicians is true, we can expect politicians to spend political capital only when it will lead to political gain, and if there are avenues to avoid spending political capital without political consequences, politicians will use these strategems.

These are what Herbst calls buffer mechanisms. He argues that there are strategies of rule that limit the expectations for and restrictions on the resources of the state. I propose an addition to Herbst's theory in that I contend that conflict is one of these buffer mechanisms as it has the capacity for limiting the ability of the opposition to organize or fully participate in



politics. In “Distinctive Political Logic of Weak States” William Reno (1999) argues that rulers in weak states that feel threatened by political adversaries will often systematically cripple the arms of the state, thereby vesting the potential power of the state in a small group of elites and making charismatic leaders an “essential” part of the government. In democratic states the destruction of the limited capacity of the state would be seen as repressive and would garner the attention of the international community as undemocratic. Conflict, however, provides political cover for the focus of the state on only those areas that serve to strengthen the political profile of domestic elites. David Keen (2000) asks us to consider war not as a chaotic and destructive force for all involved, but as a systematic method of manipulating existing political and economic conditions where the *depiction* of chaos combined with strategic violence, which can reverse traditional power structures of domination and subjugation, bring economic benefits and/or reorient the state and transfer the allocation of resources of the state to historically excluded groups. This targeted use of violence changes the nature of the economy and political structure but does not destroy the overall economy. The argument here is not that political elites will either start or directly contribute to the execution of the war, but that as long as the war does not pose significant threat to those sectors of the population that hold sway over politicians or that might be beneficial to those constituencies, there is little impetus to mobilize the resources required to terminate the conflict completely.

### State- Military Relations

The second relationship that is key to understanding how civil war duration can be used as a political tool to empower the state is that between the military and the state. Regardless of the historical era, hard-pressed rulers have used theft from neighbors or helped followers to steal as a key component to consolidate domestic political bargains. Incumbent rulers have recognized

that predation or scavenging for resources solves short-term problems of political control by keeping soldiers occupied. Deployment to peripheral areas within the country also removes them from the center of political power thereby decreasing the hypothetical threat posed by an underpaid and underemployed security community. This section will discuss the three ways in which the continuation of low level conflict is politically useful: conflict provides political cover for state predation and human rights violations; it allows the maintenance of defense budgets; and it prevents leaders from having to undertake security sector reform as that is politically treacherous, expensive and therefore undesirable.

In their study of military spending and coup attempts Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2006) concluded that in states where the perceived risk of coup d'état is high, leaders will increase military spending to appease the military. By providing more resources for military leadership, leaders build a circle of patronage strong enough to deter both the highest echelons of military leadership from seeking a change in leadership and also wide enough to prevent what Jimmy Kandeh (2004) calls sub-altern coups or junior officer coup attempts. Kandeh's key variable is "the degree to which the exercise of political power overlaps with wealth accumulation." Where power and wealth overlap, exerting the authority necessary to control those within the ranks is impossible because mutineers understand that senior officers are "stiffing" the ranks and excluding them from the tightening circle of patronage but in states where there is conflict, conflict provides political cover.

To prevent the incidence of coups, the clientalistic circles must remain wide enough to include those that are likely to usurp hierarchies of power; junior officers must be allowed sufficient leeway to find alternative sources of income. International aid structures and donor interest is the fuel that feeds the system of auto-predation and explains why a country with

limited “lootable” resources maintains the interest in conflict. Reno discusses this method of threat pacification as the “warlord politics” during which vulnerable leaders expand client networks to include those actors that are most likely to threaten their grasp on political power, effectively ensuring limited threats to political change (Reno, 1999). This tendency, if left unchecked, can draw the attention of the international community as it inevitably means looting state resources that could be used for national development and is often associated with a rise in human rights violations.

Another tactic of insecure leaders with an autonomous military is the limited state control over military predation. This strategy, coupled with a tenuous link between citizen and state, primes the system for the marginalization of certain areas and groups as collateral damage and becomes integrated into the strategy of rule. Because border protection, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, is extremely weak, armies and militias take advantage of porous boundaries to loot resources from neighboring countries and bring the actual products back across to countries where it is easier to sell and ship their product while the central government looks the other way (Reno; 2002). Paul Collier’s theory on rebellion as a quasi-criminal activity (2000) implies that rebel success is a function of state capacity; rebels will be more successful if the state is weak or does not have the resources available to combat them. In many African conflicts, this conclusion seems intuitive given the rampant institutional weakness on the continent; some states in Africa, however, have developed comparatively stable institutions. In those states we must either assume that maintaining the conflict is politically useful and state predation is not simply a negative externality of uncontrolled conflict or fall into simpler attribution of all pillage to undisciplined rebel units.

International donors, while not exclusively concerned with human rights violations, are particularly sensitive to respect for property rights as many have international business interests in developing countries . The unregulated use of violence and rapacity on the part of any force in a country is likely to draw the attention of international donors and decrease faith in the ability of the state to competently address violence within its borders. Schnabel and Erhart suggest that the post-modern soldier has many functions: policeman, diplomat, social worker, peace corp volunteer and the definition of what it means to be a soldier is ever changing (Schnabel, 2006). In developing countries soldiers have a repertoire of identities as well but they also include titles like business man, security personnel, and hired gun, which means that the official function of the military gets muddled when mixed with personal objectives of resource accumulation. The state, as Herbst points out, is equipped with the ability to defend itself from international scrutiny given the nature of state sovereignty and so the ability to defer attention away from the potential abuses of the military is politically convenient but not a sufficient reason for prolonging conflict. It is, however, not the only advantage to low level conflict. In cases where the military is accustomed to significant resources, conflict provides the justification for comparatively high levels of defense spending. A common tactic used in the developing world by military leaders is papering the payrolls with ghost troops, or troops that have been killed or deserted but still receive pay checks that are then pocketed by leadership (UPDF Commanders Confess to Existence of Ghost Soldiers, 2009). While this happens all over the developing world and does not require a conflict, domestic oversight bodies are less careful and the restrictions placed on defense spending by international financial institutions have been relaxed for countries experiencing civil war or political instability.

Ongoing conflict in post-colonial countries allows political elites to defer any attempt at security sector reform. Security sector reform generally is avoided in peace agreements, as it is complicated and requires careful apportionment across social and ethnic groups or it can be a source of resentment in the population. Schnabel and Erhart (2006) detail eleven key activities necessary for real security reform, all of which work to diversify the military while building strong norms and institutions of protocol that limit not only the individuals in the military but also the ways in which politicians can use the military. Because security sector reform seeks to professionalize the military and its relations with the population, the limits on what they can be used for can be politically disadvantageous to political leaders who are accustomed to having an ally in the military and being able to use the security community as personal security and a method of indirect political repression of oppositional candidates. During conflict, the opposition can be characterized as sympathetic to the rebel forces and leaders can call on the military to prevent effective political organization by harassing or detaining political elites and critics of the sitting government. This strategy was used in South Africa with the arrest of Nelson Mandela but reportedly has also been used extensively by leaders like Omar Bashir of Sudan and more recently by the Kagame regime in Rwanda.

By allowing conflict to continue, savvy politicians can empower themselves as representatives of the state to reduce political challenges and stifle domestic unrest while maintaining international status and, more importantly, a steady stream of international development aid and military aid. Jeffrey Herbst contends that by manipulating the norms of the international system African states qualify as system makers despite their marginal position in the global economy. If this is true, by capitalizing on international concern over political instability and desire to see their investments succeed, leaders in the developing world can

ensure continued support from the international community. Domestically, leaders can use political instability to reduce opposition, maintain the support of the military thereby reducing the chance of coup, and insulate themselves from difficult administrative tasks such as the reform of the security community and building stronger political institutions.

## METHODS

The aim of this paper is to construct a conceptual/analytical paradigm that offers an alternative approach to understanding the duration of civil war as a function of state preferences rather than exclusively the capacity or character of the rebel unit. The lack of data and resources restricts the scope of the project and my capacity to test my theory across all cases. The main task of this research is, therefore, to demonstrate that there are observable and verifiable cases in which the duration of low level peripheral civil war is a function of change in state preferences so that war becomes not a threat to the state but a tool that allows political elites to pacify domestic constituencies while the state continues to function.

To examine this case I use theory guided process tracing (TGPT) in a case study which allows for “the detailed examination of an aspect of historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (George and Bennett; 2005). In particular, process-tracing “focuses on sequential process within a particular historical case, not the correlation of data across cases” which is crucial in this project as the main argument is that the political calculations of domestic elites are the key determinants of civil war duration rather than a more readily quantifiable variable such as primary commodities or ethnic divisions.

Specifically I have chosen to follow Buthe’s method of process tracing that examines historical narratives and the method presumes endogeneity (2002). This is methodologically useful because when studies seek to incorporate relatively long time horizons, changes in variables that are endogenous to the dependent variable can significantly change actors’ preferences, options, and strategies. In civil war duration we must choose models that allow for endogeneity because prior research has shown that in the analysis of conflict duration, time is an element of causal explanation. Particularly in civil conflict, the inclusion of time as a factor is

suggested by scholars such as Zartman (2001) who see conflict as a waiting game during which a moment of ripeness is essential for conflict termination. Buthe claims that TGPT is useful for developing a new set of variables, redefining current variables or building theory, but is not suitable for theory testing. While I recognize the limitations of process tracing and will discuss them below I agree with Peter Hall in his assertion that “theory guided process tracing is an epistemologically superior method in that it can map the ontological complexity of the social world and also rule out competing theories,” (Hall; 2003). Process tracing is generally more rigorous than other qualitative methods and provides an alternative to quantitative methods, particularly in phenomenon that do not lend themselves to large-N testing such as prolonged civil conflict or theory building (Falleti; 2006). Process tracing identifies a causal chain that links independent and dependent variables (Bennett and George 2005: 206-07) and, therefore, can help identify masked variables presently absent from models that have facilitated the protraction of conflict. Methodologically, process-tracing provides the how-we-come-to-know nuts and bolts for mechanism-based accounts of social change. However, it also directs one to trace the process in a very specific, theoretically informed way.

The limitation of process tracing and qualitative theory as a whole is that it is not conducive to generalizable theories that are widely applicable. By focusing on the specific case mechanisms rather than large N data sample, we necessarily limit the initial applicability of any theories developed, but I hope to use this project to stimulate further thought not simply on Uganda but on the definition and identification of variables in duration research. Essentially the parsimony of quantitative research is sacrificed here as the price we pay for examining complex causality. Further, by using process tracing I hope to move beyond the either/or debates on the definition of key variables such as state capacity in an attempt to “inductively identify new



variables, hypotheses, causal mechanisms, and causal paths (George and Bennett 2005, 75).

George and Bennett suggest that cases whose outcomes contradict the prediction of conventional theories should be used in this type of case study because they may help demonstrate new hypotheses or causal mechanisms. To build a theory on a theory-guided case study would first require the identification of these unconventional cases.

I have chosen the war in Northern Uganda, an apparent anomaly in civil war cases, because it is the longest running civil war on the African continent (1987-Present) and much of the existing literature has theoretically thrown up its hands and largely attributes the duration of this conflict, not to rational calculation on the part of the combatants, but to religious fundamentalism, deep seated ethnic hatred, or the continued depravity of the leadership of the rebel movement. This abdication of rational theory stems from the frustration of many of the theoretical expectations in civil war duration associated with the impact of state capacity. I seek both to reintroduce rationality to the case and identify the salient determinants of conflict and to reject the idea that because Uganda's civil war has continued so long, it is an aberrant case among civil wars.

I argue, however, that Uganda should not be considered anomalous but representative of a post-colonial developing state. It is not the case itself that is inherently unique but our inability to explain adequately the duration of its civil war. As in many other post-colonial states, ethnic tensions were borne of the strategy of divide and rule that allocated state employment on the basis of European conclusions on the character of ethnic group. Also as in other post-colonial states, at independence, domestic leadership accepted the existing state institutions and traditions including the location of the capital city, military institutions, and method of managing domestic constituencies and projecting state power. Unlike other post-colonial states, Uganda has an

exceptionally high ethno-linguistic fractionalization index (ELF) value of .93 out of 1, but within the country, very clear dominant and marginalized tribes or tribal groupings exist. The Southern tribes are often referred to as a one group, whereas the Acholi and Lango tribes are only infrequently identified as the Luo people which identifies them by language, and more commonly designated as individual groups. Uganda, like many other post colonial states has a history of post independence civil conflict that has impacted the way in which state power is allocated, with the Acholi being almost completely removed from the center of political power.

And finally, Uganda like many other states in Africa came into existence in the fourth wave of democracy. These states are characterized by their incomplete construction of democratic institutions and generally flimsy commitment to constitutional limitations. These characteristics suggest that Uganda, rather than an aberrant case that can be understood only as an unlikely combination of factors, is in fact representative of many other post-colonial states. Additionally, because it is part of the developing world, Uganda shares the same international position in global power politics that many other developing states do, subject to the same conditions and requirements of donor nations and international financial institutions. These facts further reinforce my characterization of Uganda as a representative case, which means that, theoretically, conclusions gained from this study can be expanded and applied to a broader sample of cases in the future.

The proposed study has a single general argument, generated from the literature, regarding the relationship between domestic power relationships as fueled by international actors and civil war duration.

Argument: The maintenance of low intensity, peripheral conflict coupled with the injection of foreign capital successfully insulates elected officials from challenges to their

political tenure by their three key constituencies, thereby reducing the incentives to end conflict.

We can expect the interaction of these two factors, low intensity peripheral conflict and high levels of foreign aid, to reduce the likelihood of war termination by empowering the state in its relationships with three salient political actors in domestic politics: the domestic constituency, the military, the international community.

In the case of Uganda, the duration of civil conflict can be attributed to the lack of credible positive or negative inducements for the state to end the war from either the domestic or international constituencies. Specifically, the political benefits domestically and the financial benefits that come from the international community are key in understanding civil war duration. Domestically, a low intensity and protracted conflict that is geographically removed from the center of political power shapes the power relationships between state and society, state and the military, and finally the branches of government by reducing the expectations surrounding the provision of government services and protection. Internationally, to prevent donor restrictions, civil conflict can be used as a cover for the diversion of resources to the military, corruption, and unequal distribution of aid and the evasion of conditions placed on loans and debt relief.

To evaluate this theory I analyze economic data, military spending and deployment patterns, state development spending, political interaction between state and society, and the growth of the state relative to its control of its territory. The sources required for the proposed project are accessible through donor records, official state records, data from non-governmental organizations, news reports and data collected by international financial institutions. By looking at the broader patterns, I hope to reintroduce Ugandan politicians as rational actors and key players in Ugandan politics that maneuver within the system to retain power.

After my discussion of the situation in Uganda, I conclude with a fuller discussion of the determinants of civil war duration in Uganda, not as anomalous, but as a broader political tactic that can be replicated in countries that have the same scope conditions as the Ugandan case. The conditions that are necessary are common factors that are present in other developing countries.

## **CASE STUDY: THE WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA**

Given the preceding presentation of the conflict in Northern Uganda and the literature addressing the determinants of duration, I assert that we have been fundamentally misinterpreting the factors that have allowed the conflict to continue for 24 years by focusing on the rebel faction rather than the stronger government forces. Optimistic estimates suggest that the Lord's Resistance Army consists of roughly 3,000 troops spread across northern Uganda, southern Sudan, and western DRC (Living with the LRA: The Juba Peace Initiative, 2007). This force is made up of approximately one third children and 20% of the adult population of LRA combatants are "wives"<sup>7</sup> of the soldiers. These numbers mean 1,400, or almost half of the rebel strength is women and children. By contrast, the government's force strength is from 50-60,000 troops (not including militias), some 20,000 of which are deployed exclusively in the north of Uganda (Willans; 2007). After the 2002 Anti-terrorism bill in Uganda, the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) has also had the benefit of capacity building training and support of the United States and despite the cap of 1.9% of GDP set by the International Monetary Fund, military expenditure in 2006 was 2.2% of GDP allowing for greater spending on weapons and troops in the field (World Bank, 1960-2010). With the entire state being roughly the same size as Oregon, and with a peace agreement and the cooperation of the Sudanese government since 1999, how has the "ragtag" rebel force been able to elude the better manned, supplied and supported UPDF?

To answer this question, I suggest that a low intensity conflict in the boundary areas of the country coupled with international assistance allows the ruling elites of Uganda to

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<sup>7</sup> Using the term wife here is a stretch as many of the women that are associated with the LRA are not voluntary participants in either the force or the relationships with soldiers. "Ting Ting" or newly captured women are given to soldiers as rewards for faithful service and many men have more than one bush wife.

manipulate the power dynamics of domestic politics to assure their re-election or continued access to political power. This project aims to assign rational motivation to the primary actors in the conflict and question current literature that both focuses strongly on the rebel factions as the primary proponent and rejects the popular understanding of the conflict as a decent into madness. The analysis of the conflict examines the three primary relationships in Ugandan politics as suggested by the literature and the above theory: the state-military, state civil, and state-international relationships. The power relationships created with active conflict are unique and if the conflict were to end politicians would have to find a new method of maintaining office that would likely be more costly politically in terms of the effort required to gain political support. I discuss each factor and then more broadly explain how each is politically relevant to the perpetuation of the conflict. Finally, I conclude that Uganda does not represent a unique or unusual case but that the leadership in Uganda is maximizing its ability to maintain political dominance by subjugating those communities that are unlikely to support them and empowering and isolating the parts of the population that are likely to present the greatest challenge to the consolidation of power.

*Background of the Conflict:*

Uganda gained independence in 1962 and the period following the regime change between 1962-1964 was one of unusual relative peace and security in Uganda post independence history. In the 48 years since independence, there have been 9 national administrations, every one of which except the current one has been replaced through violent event, either war or coup<sup>8</sup>. Over the course of Uganda's post-colonial history, in addition to the coups and declared wars,

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<sup>8</sup> In 1980 there was an election to re-elect Milton Obote but it is widely accepted that the election was rigged and was the catalyst for Yoweri Museveni's entrance into rebellion as he promised before the election that, if the votes were rigged the National Resistance Movement would go into the bush to fight.

there have also been over 20 documented insurgencies, most of which have originated from the Northern and Western part of the country (Fredrick; 2009). Exceptions were the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni that emerged from the Luwero district in central Uganda and the Ugandan People's Army that emerged just after the NRA under the command of Peter Otai and which would later be incorporated into the national military. After a brief presentation of the history of the conflict followed by a discussion of the rebel movement and its relationship with the Northern populations, I describe the evolution of the Museveni government's relationship with his three key constituencies. This provides evidence that the duration of the war in Northern Uganda can be interpreted not as simply a weak African nation struggling for peace but as a nation whose politicians have employed a political strategy of neglect as they have seen the benefits of a low level peripheral insurgency in both governance and negotiating the international system.

Though Uganda achieved independence from the British in 1962, the country has never enjoyed a significant period of peace. Over the course of its independent history, Uganda has seen every ruler ousted from power by coup or insurgency save one in 1980 who was deposed via fraudulent elections in 1980. After those elections in 1980, Yoweri Museveni, the vice chairman of the Military Commission and leader of the



Figure 1 Area affected by LRA

Ugandan Patriotic Movement Party mobilized southern followers to begin an armed rebellion in protest of the outcome of the election. The National Revolutionary Army (NRA) led by Museveni took power in 1986 and Museveni was sworn in as president. Since the colonial era, the Acholi and Lango tribes had dominated the military and the swearing in of the Southerner Museveni created panic among military forces and their respective ethnic groups. Fearing reprisals, many former soldiers fled to the north and many Northern civilians fled to southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Capitalizing on the tensions between the Acholi and the government, Alice Auma “Lakwena”<sup>9</sup> formed the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) as a rebel force in Northern Uganda made up primarily of Acholi religious adherents and former Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLA) soldiers who had formed the Ugandan People’s Democratic Army (UPDA) after fleeing the capital. “Lakwena” was said to communicate with the spirits and used her influence as a spirit medium to lead troops and build her movement . The HSM is the insurgent antecedent to the Lord’s Resistance Army, basing their reasons for rebellion on a mixture of Christian and traditional religious principles and asserting that in Luwero the UNLA’s Acholi elements had placed a stain on the reputation of the Acholi people that required purification (Finnstrom; 2006). The HSM integrated the UPDA remnants and Northern residents afraid of the retribution of the NRA and religious adherents and was most notable for singing Christian hymns while marching into battle and their belief that they would be protected from enemy bullets by rubbing shea butter oil on their chests (Dolan; 2009).

While the HSM movement did have some early victories and an expansion of their forces to include Lango and Iteso followers, Lakwena and her forces were defeated 50 miles outside of

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<sup>9</sup> Lakwena is not a surname but a title in this context. The Lakwena, according to her and her followers, was able to channel messages from the spirit world and wanted to lead a movement that would cleanse not just the Acholi people but also the nation as a whole. For a more complete explanation of Alice Auma and the Holy Spirit Movement see Robert Gersony’s “The Anguish of Northern Uganda”.



Kampala in November of 1987. In 1988 the NRA extended amnesty to those that had participated in the UPDA/HSM and 2,000 (most of those troops who sought amnesty) were absorbed into the NRA forces. Those who resolved to continue fighting, because of the NRA treatment of Northerners or the loss of Acholi cattle to rustlers or a number of other proposed reasons, were absorbed into the fledgling movement of Joseph Kony, reported cousin of Alice Auma, the Lord's Resistance Army. The LRA was also driven by mixed religious undertones and was predominantly Acholi. Like Lakwena, Kony claimed to be a spirit messenger but is notable for his opportunistic approach to religious doctrine in that he has sampled from local Animist, Christian, and Muslim traditions as they serve his needs.

At the outset of Kony's war, reports indicated that the Lord's Resistance Army enjoyed a measure of popular support from the Acholi community. But in 1991 the government initiated "Operation North" which included a counter-insurgency operation and the organization of local defense units in Northern Uganda. During Operation North, the government imposed a media black-out in Acholiland and has been implicated in numerous extra-judicial killings, looting and human rights violations (Gersony, 1997). Despite the heavy-handed tactics of the government, much of the Acholi population was willing to support government troops in the bow and arrow defense units but were severely under-equipped to deal with the rebel attacks and were largely massacred as they had only minimal support from government troops. "Operation North" is important in the war for two reasons: first, the LRA is said to have been reduced to a fraction of its forces by 1994 and second, a rift was created between the civilian Acholi population and the LRA.

A major question that has been asked by both international observers and the Acholi community is why, if the LRA's troop numbers had been so decimated, did the government not

destroy the remaining elements of the rebellion. Some suggested that the conflict provided cover for delivery by Uganda of military supplies to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), an armed anti-Sudanese government insurgency based in southern Sudan whose goals included the dissolution of the present Sudanese state in favor of a two state solution with Northern Sudan ruled by the Arabic, Muslim majority and Southern Sudan being ruled by the Christian African majority. Yoweri Museveni attended the University of Dar es Salaam with John Garang, the head of the SPLA and openly supported the group until 2002 when Sudan and Uganda signed an agreement to end support for each other's rebel forces. Government sources assert that a lack of technical competence in the correct deployment of air and ground resources prevented a complete victory in 1991 (Gersony, 1997). Neither explanation dispelled the rumors that immediately sprang up in the Acholi community - that the government wanted to punish the Acholi for the Acholi soldiers participation in the government attempts to squash the NRA insurgency in the early 1980s (Bainomugisha, 2005). While these rumors have never been confirmed, they have shaped the relationship between the Acholi and the central government.

The second significant change that came from the 1991 unfinished operation was the change in tactics by the LRA with regards to the Acholi civilian population. Because Kony himself is an Acholi as is the majority of the rebel force, it is widely assumed by the international community and civil war scholars that the LRA is an agent of the Acholi community. In truth, the written political manifestos and speeches by the commanders of the LRA have almost always made references to the grievances of the Acholi people including the desire for reparation for lost cattle, closure of the camps, and the expansion of national politics to more fully include the Northern communities.

This advocacy, however, is squarely contradicted by the conduct of the LRA. In 1991, the government sought and received support from the traditional leadership in the Acholi community to organize Bow and Arrow defense units, which were organized as a show that the Acholi people were helping in the defense of their own community. These defense units were largely failures as they were equipped only with traditional weapons. In addition, they were not working in concert with the central government but as a substitute and so had no real reinforcements when the rebels came. Regardless of their impact, Kony took the Bow and Arrow Units as a betrayal, and from this point in the war targeted civilians, using increasingly brutal tactics. Typically, disfigurement and dismemberment were used to send a message to the Acholi when the LRA discovered informants they considered to be working with the government. This strategy has meant that the war in Northern Uganda is being fought through the Acholi community rather than for the Acholi. Svenker Finnstrom (2006) discusses this in conjunction with the public retraction of the war blessing and subsequent cursing of the LRA by Acholi elders. These claims are hard to verify but because they carry so much symbolic weight in the Acholi community even the rumors that the elders have rejected the LRA is a powerful sign to the rebel leadership. Finnstrom, suggests that, even without verification, they are part of the collective memory of the Acholi and should be considered “critical events” in the war. The rejection and failure of the LRA to cultivate durable popular support means they should not be considered “agents” of the Acholi people.

Though the majority of those now fighting with the LRA are Acholi, the force is not exclusively Acholi and it cannot be assumed that outside the high command of the group, they

are even willing participants as the number of abductions attributed to the LRA are in the tens of thousands<sup>10</sup> (Blattman, 2008).

The relationship between the North and the Southern government has not been one of complete neglect but rather inefficiency and halfhearted implementation of programs, which serves to reinforce the impression that the government is minimally concerned with the welfare of those living in northern Uganda. In 1992, the government approved the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Program (NURPI) that allocated 600 million dollars to restore basic economic and social infrastructure as well as revive economic activities in the northern region. The program actually dispersed only 93 million of those resources. The World Bank's assessment of the program attributed its limited implementation to a disorganized plan of dispersal, chronic instability, and excessive waste in the distribution of funds chiefly associated with the top down nature of the program (Post-conflict Reconstruction: The Case of Northern Uganda, 2003).

In 1993, anticipating an opportunity to reach a settlement, Betty Bigombe the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, Resident in Northern Uganda<sup>11</sup>, initiated talks with the LRA<sup>12</sup>. Bigombe is ethnic Acholi and was seen in Northern Uganda as someone committed to ending the conflict and having the interests of the community in mind. In November of 1993 Bigombe and mid-level LRA representatives met to discuss the conflict. The meeting went well, violence directed at civilians eased, and much of the Acholi community felt both sides were

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<sup>10</sup> To clarify we should not see the rejection of the LRA by the Acholi as de facto support of the central government. As will be discussed below the Acholi take the inability or unwillingness of the UPDF to protect the Acholi community and the continued use of "protected villages" where there are no services and minimal safety measures as a serious failing of the government. This dissatisfaction is manifested by the consistent oppositional voting patterns of the Acholi people. In both recent elections the governing party gained no more than 20% of the vote in any of the Acholiland provinces.

<sup>11</sup> Bigombe was originally named the Minister of State for Pacification of Northern Uganda, Resident in Gulu by Museveni but the title caused considerable controversy given the connotation of the word "pacification" in this case, and so her title was changed to appease northern leaders.

<sup>12</sup> These meetings were undertaken at first without the support of the central government and should not be seen as an explicit attempt to engage the LRA or the Acholi people. At no time were the top army leadership including the President, willing to go on record in open support of the talks and though it seemed the president supported the initiative, he remained withdrawn from the process.

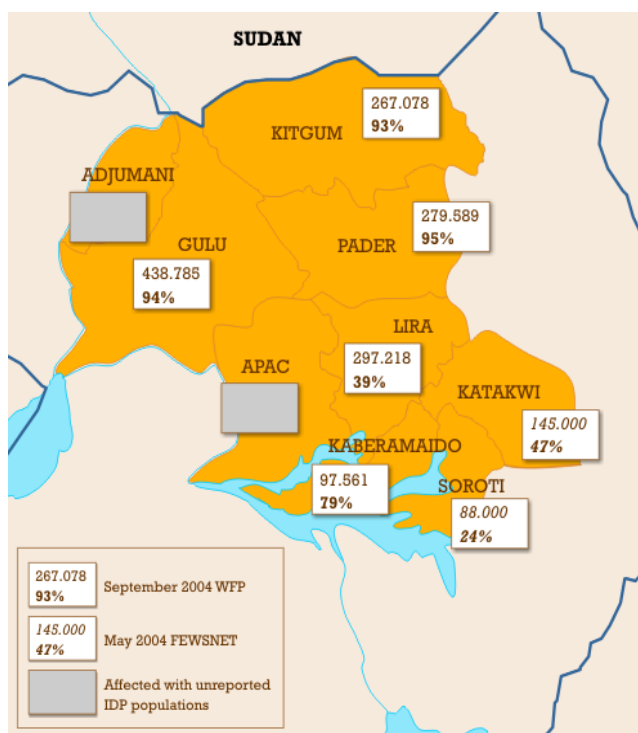
willing to make concessions to end the conflict especially when considered in conjunction with the announcement of the NURPI plans.

In January of 1994, Bigombe and government military officers met with Kony to discuss a cease-fire but the negotiations began to deteriorate in the planning for the meeting between President Museveni and Kony to make the final arrangements. In private conversations Bigombe hinted that there were attempts at every stage to sabotage the talks from various quarters, including representatives of the government (Lucima, 2002). Because of the increasing tension at the talks, the meeting between Museveni and Kony was postponed indefinitely.

In February of 1994, Museveni visited Gulu and while addressing the crowd at Kaunda Ground, the President said that Bigombe had begun talks with the LRA to restore peace, but that the LRA had taken advantage of the talks to perpetuate 'banditry' and murder. He announced that the LRA had seven days to surrender, or the government would defeat them militarily (Lucima, 2002). The LRA leadership had asked for 30 days and took the statement as an abdication of the peace talks. After the failure, the perception in the Acholi community was that the government was not actually committed to a peaceful end to the conflict and when new military leadership was brought into Gulu, many saw it as a sign that the government was giving up on peace. In 1995, just after the collapse of the talks between the government and the rebels, Yoweri Museveni was officially elected president of Uganda despite the previous 10 years of rule during which he was leader of the National Resistance Movement and leader of the country rather than elected official. During the election, Kony ordered a cease fire so that Northern residents could vote against the Museveni regime, which they did with no province in Acholi land providing more than 20% support to Museveni's bid (Stats citation). After the re-installation of Museveni and the collapse of the peace talks, the LRA crossed the border into Sudan and found a willing

benefactor in the Khartoum government. Chris Dolan notes that the period between 1994-9 was the period of most intense violence against civilians by the rebels.

In response to the increased activity of the LRA, the government encouraged and in many cases forced Northern residents to move into “protected villages” beginning in 1996. The villages included barracks and detachments of government troops with the troops stationed in the center of the camps. This project includes an expanded discussion of the conditions in the “protected villages” and so here, I will only mention that violence in the camps is endemic and troops stationed within the camps will often ignore requests for protection and abuse their power by extorting goods and services from residents as well as physically abusing inhabitants (Dolan, 2009). This continued internment of the Northern residents is particularly disturbing given that



**Figure 2 Percent of the Population by District Living in "Protected Villages"**

northerners are unemployed (Bozzoli, 2008). In addition, in response to the movement into the

by 2006, fully 20 years after the start of the conflict, more than 90% of all people living in the Acholiland lived in the government camps (Reuters, 2009). The abuses here strengthen the impression for the Acholi that the continuation of the conflict is meant as vengeance. Further it has meant the decimation of their economic capacity as most were forced to give up farms and property resulting in an almost complete reliance on the government and international NGOs for food and services as over 60% of

camps the LRA increased its activity, with an enormous number of abductions and attacks on the newly created camps, highlighting the distance between what the government was willing or able to do for the population and what was necessary to protect them.

*Acholi Civil Society and Initiatives for Peace*

In response to both the introduction of the protected villages and what locals called “panda gari<sup>13</sup>”, which was a program that forced northern residents to be able to identify themselves at all times and made them subject to interrogation and incarceration if they could not satisfactorily prove they were not a rebel or rebel sympathizer, the Acholi diaspora began openly criticizing the Kampala government for not doing enough to protect their citizens. In 1997 after the first Kacoke Madit meeting in London during which representatives from the LRA, the Acholi diaspora and domestic civil society, and the government met to discuss the conflict they also criticized Museveni for his dogged commitment to a military solution to the war rather than exploring other avenues to peace. During the period between 1997 and 1999 there was an increasing voice for civil society groups which put pressure on the central government to return to the negotiating table in 1999.

These meetings led to the 2000 Amnesty Act that granted amnesty to anyone who had since 1986 engaged in war against the government and blanket forgiveness for all persons under the age of 12 (Dolan; 2009). This concession on the part of the government appeared to signal a willingness to pursue a non-military end to the conflict.

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<sup>13</sup> <sup>13</sup> The term “panda gari” is KSwahili for “climb the truck” and has been a recurring campaign in Ugandan history. In the early 1980s under the Obote regime, soldiers would station themselves at markets and religious places and select young people from the crowds that they suspected to be supporting guerillas or more generally were anti-government. During this time, the vast majority of those who were taken by government soldiers never returned. A.B.K. Kasozi asserts that as few as 10% of those taken during “panda gari” campaigns returned (Kasozi; 1994: 148). Under Museveni’s rule, the same tactic was used in the North. In the early 1990s mainly women and children were rounded up but in the later iterations of the practice young men and boys were detained, arrested, and sometimes executed on suspicion of being a rebel or rebel supporter (Dolan; 2009: 47)

In 2001, however, Museveni was re-elected and in 2002, the parliament passed the Anti-terrorism Act, which effectively repealed the amnesty agreements and increased military spending. Also in 2002 the governments of Sudan and Uganda undertook a joint military operation, "Operation Iron-Fist," during which 10,000 Ugandan troops were permitted to cross into Sudan in search of rebels and also crossed into the Democratic Republic of Congo, ostensibly for the same reasons. In turn, the LRA attacked civilian populations with a brutality not seen since the establishment and removal of the Acholi population into protected villages in 1996.

During this same period of 2001-2002, Acholi civil society, comprised of the Rwot of the Acholi and the Ker Kwaro Acholi<sup>14</sup> and the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) actively petitioned the government for a peaceful settlement to the conflict and closure of the "protected villages." President Museveni, however, announced in *New Vision*, the government newspaper, that the camps would not close until the LRA had been destroyed and the UPDF twice attacked religious leadership saying they were thought to be rebel supporters (Ochola, 2006). The rocky relationship between Museveni and the military and the Acholi leadership has perpetuated a culture of mistrust in Uganda and made it clear that the Acholi have very limited control over the activities of their government.

In 2003 after undertaking "Operation Iron Fist", President Museveni announced that Uganda would refer the rebel group to the International Criminal Court for prosecution to rebuild flagging international support for the regime. This decision would later be reversed when it became politically less useful for the regime. From the middle of 2004 on, rebel activity dropped

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<sup>14</sup> The Ker Kwaro Acholi is a groups of traditional Acholi leaders that are working to see a negotiated settlement in Uganda and strengthen ties between the Ugandan Acholi and Sudanese Acholi peoples. For a more complete discussion of the Religious Leaders' Initiative see Robert Ochola's *The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative in the Battlefield of Northern Uganda*



markedly under intense military pressure in both Uganda and Sudan where the LRA had established rear bases. The government was also the target of increasingly pointed criticism from the international community for its failure to end the conflict. International aid agencies questioned the Ugandan government's reliance on military force and its commitment to a peaceful resolution. So in 2006 the government and LRA returned to negotiations but the government admitted to maintaining military operations against the LRA during the duration of the two year peace talks. Both the Acholi community within Uganda and the diaspora has condemned this manner of negotiation on the part of the Kampala government as disingenuous and Kony has refused to sign any agreements as he and the leadership fear immediate prosecution if they cooperate. The inflammatory statements by President Museveni to the press reinforce this fear<sup>15</sup>.

This history forms the basis for the relationship between the government and the Acholi people and though much of the blame for the continued violence is attributed to the LRA by media and NGOs, a consistent reluctance on the part of the government to make peace is evident to the residents of the Northern provinces. In 2008, the negotiations between the rebels and the government again failed as the LRA was reported to be purchasing new weapons; the heads of Uganda, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) agreed to launch the "Garamba Offensive" in the Garamba Forest in the northern corner DRC to finally destroy the rebel faction. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2008, the Ugandan government released a statement saying that 70% of the LRA's camps had been destroyed so far (BBC, 2008). Directly following the release of that

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<sup>15</sup> To the New Vision paper in Uganda Museveni said "If Kony does not take chance of the peace talks, he will perish like the [biblical] pharaoh," in 2007 during the Juba peace talks and more recently, "If our troops get a chance of capturing Kony, he will be tried here and be hanged. We will not take him to ICC court in Hague court because there they take such people in hotels. Here, we will hang him" on March 10<sup>th</sup> of this year. (Magga, 2010)

statement, however, the LRA was implicated in the massacre of 400 people in the DRC on Christmas Day.

Since then, reports of the LRA in the DRC, Sudan, Uganda, and the Central African Republic have surfaced, although few can be confirmed. What can be confirmed is that despite international commitment to eliminating the LRA, the combined power of Uganda, Sudan and the DRC has failed to remove the threat for 24 years of fighting. In Michael Wilkerson's article (2010) questioning why the LRA can't be stopped, he concludes that, "put simply, the LRA's fortuitous combination of murky international alliances, child soldiers, and bumbling enemies has proved stronger than any military offensive over the last 20 years." I contend, however, that given the resources that have been made available to the Ugandan government, the continuation of the conflict in Northern Uganda continues, not because insufficient resources are available or that the LRA has amazing luck, but that the combination of international assistance and the low level conflict conditions the relationships between the state and civilian population and the state and the military. The addition of these two factors secures the administration in the midst of insecurity in the country and makes the termination of conflict unlikely until the costs of war outweigh the benefits of political cover internationally and domestically with limited political challenge to the sitting administration. The following sections apply the theory presented above to the case of Uganda.

#### *Civil State Relationship:*

The relationship between the government and the people in Uganda is often defined as merely as a function of ethnic tensions created during the colonial period and continued by the post-colonial leadership. While this tension is salient in Ugandan politics, elites use ethnicity as a tool that can clearly define their primary constituencies and condition the voting public

expectations of the voting public from individual politicians and more recently political parties. Ethnicity in and of itself is not the source of conflict but merely the identity used by elites to mobilize parts of the population. In this sense, what the division is doesn't matter but that there is a division that has been deftly used to condition the electorate's understanding how to garner access to the state and its resources. Structuring political competition on the basis of ethnic affiliation, however, is not an accepted method of governing by international aid agencies such as World Bank, the IMF and OECD countries upon which Uganda relies heavily with 48% of its GDP coming from international assistance (Taylor and Francis Group, 2004). While World Bank is officially apolitical, they monitor six dimensions of governance and corruption as a way of measuring a state's development which is used by other countries when considering bilateral aid and organizations like the Bush Administration's Millennium Challenge Account which does not lend to countries unless they have met the World Bank standards of good governance.

A political constituency that has direct lines of accountability to individual politicians and expects resources to be provided in exchange for their continued support and international donors who see this neo-patrimonial political model as institutionalized corruption and can withhold assistance based on the perceived corruption of the state (or funnel funds into non-state intermediaries as they did during the late 1970s and early 1980s<sup>16</sup> after economists began to question the efficacy of state led development strategies) create two important constraints. Rulers need some method of providing for their primary constituencies without losing the financial backing of the international aid community.

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<sup>16</sup> This development strategy was outlined in E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (1989) that argued against the desirability of industrialization and extolled the merits of handicrafts economies. Put briefly, the emphasis for development should not be on government initiatives but individual and local efforts to develop. What this movement accomplished was the removal of the state from playing its previously substantial role in economic development and encouraged a bottom up view on development.

In Uganda leaders have solved this problem by allowing the low level insurgency of the LRA to continue in the North as the insurgency divides the constituency into those affected by the civil war and those who are not. This division roughly mimics the existing ethno-geographic division of the country, effectively masking the existing political constituencies by dividing the country into places where service provision is feasible and places where it is not rather than North and South or Buganda and Banyankole and Acholi.

In all countries where there are active wars different segments of the population bear varying burdens. But in the cases where the people who are most affected by the conflict do not provide political resources to the leadership of the country, rulers will not invest the resources necessary to end the conflict as the investment does not provide sound return. This is the mechanism by which civil wars are extended temporally. I. William Zartman introduces the concept of a “mutually hurting stalemate” which requires a depletion of available resources, the costs for continued conflict to be too high and/or a reduction in in-group support (2001).

In Uganda, if we consider the LRA as the sole culprit for the duration of civil war, the picture is baffling as there is almost no support for the war among the Acholi, resources are scarce, and the population is no longer willing to join the group. But if we accept that the state plays a part in the duration and termination of conflict, we see that resources are not scarce, and in fact the country receives military assistance to subsidize its “war effort.” The primary constituency of the sitting administration is outside the conflict area, and the benefits of low level conflict are greater than the disadvantages and do not threaten the continued functioning of the economic and political seats of power within the country.

The second problem faced by elected officials that is mitigated by the ongoing conflict in the North is the threat of a strong political opposition. While in a functional democratic system

political competition is an expected outcome, where politicians can restrict that competition without fear of consequence we can expect them to do so. By allowing the war to continue, political opposition is limited in two ways: the marginalization of opposition parties and politicians as rebel supporters and the limitation of the ability of the affected communities from participating in politics with the continued use of IDP camps and military presence in the North. In Uganda, the Acholi, and more broadly the northern ethnic groups have been politically marooned with no access to the government or reasonable expectation of service provision, a situation which, in theory, should encourage political mobilization to demand basic services of the state. Even when resources were allocated for the North, such as 1992 Northern Uganda Reconstruction Program I which allocated 660 million dollars to development programs in the North, only 93 million was ever distributed to the programs for which it was intended. The rest disappeared into other programs or was converted into the personal resources of those charged with the execution of the program.

This clear example of corruption in a democratic system should be an incident that prompts the political reaction of the affected community but because the Acholi are so far removed from the political process, the reaction was limited. In 2005 Uganda officially lifted the ban on multi-party politics which should have provided space for opposition parties to organize and compete on equal footing with the National Resistance Movement, but opposition candidates and even civil society groups seeking the end of the conflict in the North have experienced consistent pressure from both the military and the state under the aegis of national security and counter terrorism efforts. By limiting the ability of those people marginalized in the current system to organize politically, sitting politicians limit effective political challenge without openly

restricting political participation. These two problems have been solved by the low level conflict while allowing politicians to maintain the international aid flow into Uganda.

The two key assumptions about democratic governance are challenged when the state is not constructed to be a representative of all people. That history will establish a pattern of marginalization and demonstrate for politicians that there are effective ways of making traditionally collective goods into selective rewards for those faithful to their own administration and limiting the ability of those outside the circles of patronage to punish politicians for not providing equal benefits by limiting their access to the political system. Historically, the British deemed the Acholi<sup>17</sup> the tribal group best suited for military service and so they constructed an Acholi dominated colonial military and because the Buganda people in the South represented the largest and most politically cohesive of the kingdoms the British saw them as the most suited for governance positions. In addition, the area identified as Acholiland, which comprises most of the territory above the White Nile, contains only four percent of the country's arable land so the British saw the south as a stronger economic investment. This resulted in the vast majority of colonial investments being concentrated in the South with the North used as a labor reserve for Southern farms and industries and the military. Effectively this created a base of power for both regions, the Acholi represented in the military and the Southern tribes (dominated by the Buganda) represented in the economic and governance structures.

After independence, however, the military has been seen as a key political asset and with every regime change, the armed forces have been purged and restructured with representatives from the ethnic group of the regime leadership rather than ever forming a representative and

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<sup>17</sup> In southern Uganda the word "Acholi" is loosely used to refer to all of the Nilotic, Sudanic, and Hamitic peoples of northern Uganda rather than specifically the Acholi ethnic group. Also people from the Northern districts of Uganda have been called "Anyanya" a pejorative that suggests that the Northern population is not Ugandan but Sudanese. (Fredrick; 2009)

independent body. This purge and stock strategy should not be interpreted as the manifestation of primordial hatreds but as a symptom of Hyden's "economy of affection." As discussed above, the Ugandan state, like other colonial possessions was not constructed as a national project between elites and the population but imposed by the British colonizers. The governing structure installed was one of indirect rule whose purpose was to maximize the outputs for British people and industries at minimum cost. This meant suppressing rebellion and limiting state expenditure were the key priorities of the administration.

After the British left, the post-colonial leadership did not change the way the government was constructed and the state is seen as a source of resources for a politician's direct constituency rather than a representative of a broader Ugandan population. That this method of political service clearly is how politics is understood in Uganda today becomes evident when examining the levels of social service provision and economic development in each half of the country.

Traditional indicators such as unemployment and health and social service provision provide a stark picture of the difference in development between the North and South. This project does focus on the duration of conflict in Uganda but the pattern of service provision and involvement of the central government in the North should be seen as a model of how they will view security as well. The Department for International Development's (DFID) Cindy Carlson noted, while reviewing health service provision in Northern Uganda, that "the government would appear to have ambivalent will and uncertain capacity to resolve the conflict in the north and to devote national resources to services in northern districts." (Carlson, 2004) In 2006 the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics conducted a Demographic and Health Survey in the country and found that child mortality rate for children under 5 in Kampala was just over half of the mortality

rate in the north, 94 and 177 per 100,000 children respectively. Similarly, unemployment rates reflect this pattern of government investment and overall development. In 1993, poverty rates were 73.5% Northern Uganda and 56.4% for the overall country. By 2006, national poverty estimates dropped to 27.1%, but in Northern Uganda they remained at 66%. (Bozzoli, 2008)

When looking at the above statistics, it would be a mistake to assume that the government of Uganda was actively persecuting those who live in the North as an overt project or campaign to destroy the Acholi. Some have suggested that the conflict in the North should be considered a genocide in which the government is complicit but the difficulty is proving the intention to destroy the Acholi given the likelihood that international assistance would end and disrupt the already wobbly power structure that exists in Uganda (Otunnu, 2006). Genocide is not rational when the continued power of sitting politicians is so dependent on foreign assistance in funding social programs and military spending. The argument being presented here is that the duration of the war in the north is the logical outcome of the manner by which the state was constructed and the attempt by politicians to minimize the resources necessary to maintain political power by only representing those people who pose a threat to political tenure. The decision to fight by the LRA changed the incentive structure that existed in Uganda and by isolating, targeting, and drawing from only one ethnic group, they effectively relieved the state of the responsibility to protect and provide for that sector of the population as now the resources required to end the conflict are greater than those required to contain it. The rewards here are votes and resources for the state. In Uganda, the vast majority of the economic enterprise is located in the South as is the stronghold of government support. If the supporters of the government should begin to bear the cost of continued conflict, the government would have the incentive to intercede more effectively to end the conflict as they have done with other rebellions.



Since 1986 when the NRA took power there have been over 20 armed rebellions in Uganda which have either been coopted into the LRA or they were more geographically proximate to the government and were therefore addressed quickly. With each one the government has courted and subsequently absorbed the soldiers into the national army. There have been some attempts by the government to do the same with the LRA but movements like the Amnesty Act of 2000 are seen as disingenuous by the broader civilian population because of the state's persistent refusal to commit to a non-military solution and the rebels have been seen as a trap as there are reports of surrendering LRA soldiers being shot as active rebel combatants or being forced to join the state military<sup>18</sup>.

Examples of overt repression of opposition candidates exist. The government has attempted to tie the ongoing insurgency to emergent political leadership even though virtually all of the leadership from the North has flatly rejected the LRA and has called for the peaceful end to the conflict. In 2005, after a referendum, the ban on multi-party politics was lifted to allow opposition parties in Uganda after pressure from international donors with concerns of the legitimacy of the "democratic" government in Uganda.

In 2001 Dr. Kizza Besigye, a former supporter of the NRM and friend of Museveni, ran under the movement system to challenge Museveni but was defeated and subsequently threatened into exile until 2005 when party politics were instituted in Uganda. Upon his return Besigye was court martialed for collaborating with the terrorists (LRA) and treason. He was arrested when he arrived in Uganda and was released from prison only one month before the election after the case against him was dismissed as the court ruled that the High Court could not hear court martial charges (BBC, 2006). His prosecution was especially puzzling given his

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<sup>18</sup> There has been recent outcry over this tactic because the Ugandan military has been indicted in the use of children and mistreating those who are willingly surrendering.

history as an NRM loyalist, colonel in the army and personal physician to Museveni. It was only when he became critical of the regime did the allegations arise.

Further Olara Otunnu, a leading oppositional voice in Uganda has been prevented from returning to Uganda for the upcoming presidential election because of charges of sedition and promoting sectarianism after suggesting that President had been involved in prolonging the civil war in the North (Lawrence, 2009). These examples are typical in semi-democratic countries where political competition is not institutionalized but in Uganda, the persecution of the opposition is tolerated because of the ongoing threat in the North. The marginalization of the North is not restricted to only potential political challengers but also to the people of the north. The “protected villages” are a source of conflict between the central government and leaders, political and religious in the north. There are socio-economic costs of the camps paid by the residents as well as political costs. The feeling in the broader Acholi community is that they are being punished for not supporting Museveni and the NRM. Otunnu, also a former U.N. under secretary-general and special representative for children and armed conflict and presidential candidate from Gulu district in the North has suggested that by not ending the conflict the government has not only abdicated its role as a protector of Ugandan citizens but is actively allowing for the destruction of the Acholi and Lango people.

While that is not the argument being made here, the camps do serve a purpose for the government. Constructed under the auspices of providing protection for the northern population and to separate the possibly sympathetic recruits from the LRA, the camps have been used as a way of controlling the movement and activities of the Acholi. During the 1996 “panda gari” campaign, numerous reports of government soldiers harassing political opponents of Museveni and targeting political rallies effectively prevented solid political mobilization from within the

Acholi community (Dolan; 2009). Dislocation makes voting a difficult process at election time and the presence of state troops in the camps to regulate and monitor the activities of camp residents makes political mobilization almost impossible.

Willet Weeks, working for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, attributes the lack of motivation by the government as a symptom of the lack of political utility the Acholi as voters have for the government saying, “the fact that the three districts have consistently voted for the political opponents of the present government...has cemented the latter’s view that Acholiland is inhospitable territory.” (Weeks, 2002) Even if the government is not acting with intent to marginalize the Acholi people, the understanding in the camps and the community more broadly is that this is the intention. By sending this message to the community, the government effectively pushes them out of the political sphere and, given the constant military presence in the camps and the environment of fear and resentment among the Acholi, prevents any real mobilization

### *State Military Relations*

The second factor that strongly determines the length of civil war in Uganda is the nature of civil-military relations. In every historical era, hard-pressed rulers have used theft from neighbors or helped followers to amass personal fortunes at the expense of the broader population as a key component of domestic political bargaining. This is especially true in states where the military retains a significant portion of its independence. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2006), in their study of military spending and coup attempts, concluded that in states where the perceived risk of coup d’état is high, leaders will increase military spending to appease the military. Coup risk is inevitably high in states like Uganda where the military has not only retained political independence but has historically been the guardians of political power in the

country. This section will outline the history of state military relations and show why leaders believe that appeasement of the military is necessary and how the conflict in the North is used as part of a strategy of appeasement.

Since independence in 1962, seven political regimes have ruled in Uganda. Of those seven *every* leader excluding the sitting president has been removed by military intervention, be it by coup d'état (Milton Obote I, Yusuf Lule, and Godfrey Binaisa), internal revolution (Milton Obote II and Tito Lutwa Okello) or externally funded war (Idi Amin). Additionally, during this period there were two failed attempts on Obote's life that were said to have originated out of the military. These regime changes have conditioned political elites, especially President Museveni, who was involved in the removal of three of the other six political leaders, to understand the military as a key source of political power and, like leaders historically, has tried to decrease the likelihood of internal revolt by providing goods, resources and the freedom to amass wealth by using their positions in the military.

The most famous example of keeping troops happy and loyal and assert himself as the guardian of the bounty of the state was the so-called "whiskey run" almost weekly to Stansted Airport in Britain, when plane loads of King of Scots blend scotch, radios, and luxury goods were purchased by President Idi Amin to distribute among his officers and troops (Byrnes, 1990). An African proverb sums up the understanding of the military by Amin and other leaders as "A dog with a bone in its mouth can't bite."

To provide this largesse to the military, leaders must have access to resources from either tax accumulation, natural resources, or international aid that is part of their discretionary spending budget. The old-style personal dictatorships that ruled Africa with impunity are virtually nonexistent today as are rulers like the Central African Republic's Jean-Bedel Bokassa,

or Equatorial Guinea's Macias Nguemamen, who eliminated potential dissent with such brutality and openly allowed the military to extract resources both from the state and local populations. These dictatorial regimes have almost all been replaced with semi-democratic regimes that are heavily dependent on international assistance externally and therefore restricted by international conditions domestically and are required to either meaningfully reduce military predation by restricting the power of the military or by finding ways to engage the military in ways that appear legitimate internationally.

Museveni, after taking control of the capital, appointed his closest allies to top positions in government, purged without compensation the existing soldiers and officers who were primarily Acholi and opposed his takeover of government, and forced their retreat to the Holy Spirit Movement and later the LRA. Appointing those who had fought with him during the civil war to these newly vacated positions prevented unrest among his troops, thereby limiting the likelihood of an officer coup and establishing a representative of the regime within the military. Museveni eventually filled many of the top military and intelligence positions in government with his own family including the appointment in 1996 of his brother, General Salim Saleh, to lead the government initiative in the North and Saleh later served as the commander of the army's Reserve Force from 1990 -2001. (Family Rule in Uganda, 2009)

Also to maintain stability and prevent coup attempts from within the military, Museveni has given his troops a wide range of territory and implemented little regulation on civilian-soldier interaction or secondary incomes for soldiers. This territory includes Uganda, north of the White Nile, where the Acholi dominated areas of the country are and Eastern DRC, and Southern Sudan where reports of the LRA have provided access for Ugandan troops and the natural resources have provided the desire for troop commanders to “police” their neighbors.

Because the borders between these countries are so porous there is limited complaint from border states until Ugandan troops challenge the authority of domestic militaries in auto-predation. This has led to the appropriation of resources by all levels of the military to subsidize their limited and sporadic salaries. Ugandan soldiers have crossed both the Northern and Western borders into Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo and have been documented bringing Congolese natural resources across the border into Uganda. Ugandan soldiers also have been charged with extracting resources from residents of the "protected villages" in Northern Uganda and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has called for the removal of all Ugandan troops from Sudan as they have been implicated in the destruction of villages and murder of Sudanese civilians (Dak, 2008)

The resource extraction and lack of discipline of Ugandan troops is so widely reported that both Sudan and the DRC, neither of which are known for disciplined armed forces have requested that Ugandan troops be pulled out of their territories. The DRC, in fact, brought suit in the International Court of Justice against Uganda for human rights violations and the looting of resources such as gold, diamonds and copper from Eastern DRC in 2005 (Branch, 2007). This case, while useful in establishing the activities of Ugandan troops, is an unusual check on the army's activities. Incumbent rulers often recognize that predation solves short-term problems of political control by keeping soldiers occupied; in the case of Uganda, the central government has essentially institutionalized the conflict as a part of the Ugandan politics.

The conflict in the North allows the Museveni government to fund the military and provide political cover for the indiscipline of Ugandan troops. Uganda's military spending has remained over the cap of 1.9% set by the World Bank and IMF's since the loans were provided in 1997 under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Currently, spending is 2.2% of the

GDP but has been as high as 3% of GDP. By providing more resources for military leadership, Museveni has built a circle of patronage that deters both the highest echelons of military leadership, who are not already family, from seeking a change in leadership and also wide enough to prevent sub-altern or junior officer coup attempts. To prevent the incidence of coups, the clientalistic circles must remain wide enough to include those that are likely to usurp hierarchies of power. To do this Museveni has provided state resources and allowed for UPDF fighters to cross into neighboring countries to engage in extra-state predation of resources to make up for the unreliable and limited salaries of the troops. Both Branch and Reno suggest that these weaken the incentive for the military to seek negotiated settlements because they are more interested in prolonging the situation that allows for personal wealth accumulation (Branch; 2005, Reno; 2004). Traditionally, the armed forces are separated conceptually from society but this example demonstrates the lessons learned by citizens in African states dominated by a government structure disconnected from its citizens. Elites use the power of the state to amass wealth at the expense of the general population and, in the case of Uganda, military service opens avenues of resource accumulation. Those who are outside of the circles of influence have few options other than to rebel or to suffer in silence because the administration, by pocketing the military ensures that the military will not target the administration for removal and will also help to prevent the rebellion of groups within society. After retirement, officers utilize the contacts and power from their military service to build retirement packages that allow them continued access to state resources.

Matthew Green (2008) in his investigation of the LRA notes the persistence of retired generals as shop, hotel, and bar owners in the North of Uganda. Where the local population is almost completely sequestered into camps, ex-military dominate the economic arena in the north.

Reno terms this method of threat pacification “warlord politics” in which vulnerable leaders expand client networks to include those actors that are most likely to threaten their grasp on political power, effectively ensuring limited threats to political change. Reno’s “warlord politics” are no better identified than by Museveni’s tactic of incorporating rebel groups into the standing military to prevent overt threats to the political system.

Weak state control over military predation, coupled with a tenuous link between citizen and state, primes the system for the marginalization of certain areas and groups as collateral damage and becomes integrated into the strategy of rule. International aid structures and donor interest is the fuel that feeds the system of pillage and looting of the northern population and explains why a country with such limited “lootable” resources maintains the interest in conflict. Not only are groups fighting for access to humanitarian and development aid, but also for the right to move across borders. Because border protection, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, is extremely weak, armies and militias take advantage of porous boundaries to loot resources from neighboring countries and bring the actual products back across to countries where it is easier to sell and ship their product. The international community seems to overlook this type of behavior and the DRC cannot protect its resources because it is essentially a failed state. To the question “why continue to fight over nothing?” the answer is: access to aid and the ability to plunder not just one country but all of the surrounding ones without international outcry.

While this solution has worked for the Ugandan administration in the task of pacifying the military, the delicate balance between domestic and international constraints cannot be overstated. Uganda is widely lauded as a “as the model country in the reconfiguration of power in late twentieth-century Africa” because it has “enthusiastically adopted structural adjustment reforms, benefited from large inflows of development aid, introduced partial political



liberalization, given early emphasis to human rights and popular participation at the local level, used military force to enhance state cohesion and stability without overt repression." (Tripp, 2004) President Bill Clinton on his 1998 tour of African nations identified Yoweri Museveni as a "new breed" of African leadership because of Museveni's stated commitment to democracy and economic reform (Olaka-Onyango, 2004).

Because of such international perception of Uganda, it was the first country to enter the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and in 2000 reached the completion point, overall receiving approximately two billion dollars in debt relief. Uganda is not one of the forgotten developing countries but rather it has had extensive international involvement in constructing the post-independence nation. This involvement, while positive in terms of macro-economic indicators has done little to foster peace. Uganda's geographic position and the desire on the part of the donor community to declare Uganda a success story have reduced the scrutiny with which the international aid organizations look at Uganda's political progress. In effect, they are actually perpetuating the conflict by providing extensive aid that is used as a state resource and by refusing to use leverage to guarantee the cooperation of the parties at the negotiating table.

In order to maintain the financial support of the international community these two pictures of Uganda must be reconciled. To do this the regime is using the war in the North of the country as a mask for activities pursued by the military that violate international laws and norms such as the deployment of troops across state borders and the violation of human rights laws during exercises. Further, accusations of targeting the political opposition have been leveled against the military, especially in the north, but the incidents have been rejected by the administration as moments of indiscipline by rogue soldiers rather than direct orders from the government. Here I do not mean to imply that the government is directly using the military to

harass nascent opposition but that the abuse by the military can continue because the military plays such an active part in Ugandan life. The government has gone on record numerous times to publically censure the military but these public acts are taken domestically as disingenuous as they are not followed by actual redress of grievances. Most notably President Museveni removed Salim Saleh from his position in the North after accusations of looting and indiscipline but rather than take real punitive action against him, Saleh was appointed as the senior presidential advisor on defense and security (Family Rule in Uganda, 2009). Actions like the one above communicate to the domestic population, particularly those who are most often targeted by the military, that indiscipline by military officers is quietly tolerated. Further, whether ordered or not, the sitting regime derives direct benefits from the relative indiscipline of the military as it carries with it the implicit threat of violence for organizing against the state.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This project has presented evidence to suggest that in Uganda the motives and preferences of the state have extended the duration of civil conflict beyond the limits of what we would expect given the state capacity, economic development of the state and commitment issues that exist in the country. Importantly, I dismiss the motivations and preferences of the Lord's Resistance Army as the principle reason for the extension of conflict and suggest that the conflict length is in fact a consequence of the decision made by the government actors rather than an inexplicable anomaly in civil war literature. In the past, LRA troops who surrendered under the 2001 Amnesty Act were forced into the army under threat of being charged as traitors, the penalty for which is death in Uganda. The uncertainty of the rebel forces in Uganda though can also be seen as a function of the government's public treatment of the subject of the peace agreement rather than an independent variable as public statements and speeches by the administration are signals to the rebel forces regarding the state's commitment to peace. Accordingly the preceding theory makes two important contributions for the study of civil war more broadly. First I argue that civil war duration should be understood as a function of the calculations made both by rebel units *and* the established state which has implications for the way in which we think of the preferences of the state. Additionally the theoretical expectations suggest new variables that can be used in large N studies of duration.

The above theory challenges our conception of the fundamental role and preferences of the state. Common wisdom dictates that the state will provide for the common defense in the interest of self preservation. Because we generally understand instability anywhere in the country as a threat to the state, the assumption is then that the state will mobilize its resources in order to eliminate the threat. In the case of low level peripheral conflict in cases where the

international community the resources necessary for the state to survive the case of Uganda suggests that the preferences of the state departs from these assumptions. Where we would expect to see security and stability as the primary and enduring goal, the incentives that would be created in the event of domestic conflict are missing.

Essentially the conclusion of the preceding work is that political actors will make the decisions that have the most perceived political utility rather than serve the role as “platonic guardian” of their citizens. If the conflict does not affect the regions that provide revenues: industrialized areas, sites of natural resource extraction, or agricultural areas or those regions in which the principle constituency of the political elites: ethnic, religious geographic, or linguistic groups then the state is not forced to marshal the considerable resources necessary for bring conflict to an end. Additionally if political elites see other benefits to extending conflict such as the engagement of a semi-autonomous military, political cover for international goals, the manipulation of international actors or the political marginalization of opposition groups there exist disincentives to ending conflict as long as those conditions persist.

This conclusion is key to the future study of civil war and the relationship between the state and its constituency because it challenges the utility of examining the state as an unitary organism and instead forces us to acknowledge the state not as a single organism but instead an ecosystem in which individual actors make self interested and political decisions sometimes at the expense of parts of the population. This conclusion is not a new one in the broader study of state decision making and preference ordering, Robert Bates in 1987 concluded that political rather than economic concerns drove crop pricing policies for instance. But the state has been generally undertheorized by scholars of civil war largely I would speculate because the overall security of a country is traditionally viewed as crucial to regime survival.

Second this study has generated testable hypotheses that could be used for broader comparison in large N quantitative comparison. By concluding that we are looking at only half the picture with existing civil war literature we can hypothesize new variables that can be added to existing models of duration which have, according to Collier and Hoeffler performed “remarkably badly” in predicting the conclusion of conflict (2001). New variable suggested by this project include: a measure of elite- population ethno-linguistic homogeneity, government dependence on population resource extraction (of the affected population), ethnic diversity within the military, and degree of autonomy in the military. With regards to a country’s civil state relationship the addition of a variable that identifies whether the affected population shares the same socio-linguistic characteristics as the ruling elites. In Uganda the salient characteristics of social groups are geographic and ethnic but other possible markers include but are not limited to language or religion as well. This indicator should measure the linkages between the affected population and the representatives that are at least theoretically representing their interests. Another variable suggested by the above discussion is the historical resource extraction from the affected population. If prior resource extraction was high we can expect the state would be more inclined to end the conflict whereas in areas where prior capital flow was minimal we can expect the state to be less willing to provide the resources for the public defense.

With regards to the military state relationship there are also a number of new variables that can be derived from the above discussion. Primarily the above discussion proposes that a semi-autonomous or completely autonomous military could contribute to the duration of civil war. Military autonomy is a challenge to civilian control of government and civilian leaders may see an ongoing conflict in the country as a way of ensuring the allegiance of the military to the state as a way of preventing enterprising officers from capitalizing on the boredom and

discontent of peace time among junior officers and staging a coup. Further, the character of the military can be useful in understanding duration of civil war. If the military is a representative institution in national politics then the expansion or reduction of the armed forces more likely to be a policy decision based on the needs of state but if the military is dominated by a certain ethnic or linguistic group the military is a vehicle of patronage politics and the change in absolute size and composition is difficult. When faced with international conditions placed on military spending politicians must either make difficult cuts to military spending or find political cover for maintaining the defense services. These variables shift the focus of quantitative models from the calculations of rebel leadership to a combination of the preferences of rebels and the preferences and calculations of the state which should expand our understanding of both duration and state decision making. Generally speaking these two aspects of this project while illustrated in the context of the Ugandan civil war above are generalizable to any country experiencing civil war.

To conclude, while more cases are necessary to test this theory of state decision making I suggest that state preferences are variable and emerge from the dynamic context and needs of individuals within the state rather than from fixed responsibilities of the state. They not only change across countries but also across time as the shifting political environment of war changes the incentives and rewards for action or inaction as the case may be. Since little research on the state's calculations during war has been included in civil war research the space for further research is considerable. Also suggested by this research is an examination of the role of the international donor community in the protraction of civil war. Emergency and military aid have been the ubiquitous offerings of charity from the international community to the people of states in conflict but this study suggests that in situations of peripheral conflicts, international aid may

have the opposite effect on conflict and may in fact be prolonging the suffering of affected communities by disincentivizing the termination of conflict. Because of the severity of the implications of that hypothesis, more work is crucial not only to our more general understanding of war but to future policies regarding war torn countries. Finally, analysis of what factors most significantly affect the hierarchy of state preferences is a clear field of study. An assessment of the affect of military autonomy on civil war duration are clearly indicated by this study. This should open the field for more robust conceptions of variables and a greater understanding of the relationship between the state and its principle constituencies.

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## APPENDIX

NAME	YEAR ASSUMED OFFICE	COUNTRY
<b>Muammar al-Gaddafi</b>	<b>1969</b>	<b>Libya</b>
<b>Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>Equitorial Guinea</b>
<b>Blaise Compaore</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>Burkina Faso</b>
<b>Zine El Abidine Ben Ali*</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>
<b>Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>Sudan</b>
<b>Yahya Jammeh</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>The Gambia</b>
<b>François Bozizé Yangouvonda</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>Central African Republic</b>
<b>Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Mauritania</b>
<b>Andry Rajoelina</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Madagascar</b>
<b>Salou Djibo</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Niger</b>