

Workshop programme

Gender, Violence, and the Children Born of War in Northern Uganda: New Directions in Research

A Joint workshop by the School of History and Cultures and the Children Born of War Innovative Training Network



April 19th 2016

**Danford Room, Arts Building (2nd floor), University of Birmingham, Edgbaston
Campus**



Workshop overview

The purpose of this research workshop is to discuss current research on gender-based violence and “Children Born of War” in Northern Uganda and neighbouring regions affected by the LRA conflict. Presentations focus on actors’ strategies and moralizing discourses about legitimate/illegitimate sexuality that developed as a consequence of war. The focus is on the negotiation of gender and sexuality in war and post-war (Panel 1); and on the experiences of “Children Born of War”, their mothers, and their host communities (Panel 2). Presentations in each panel are followed by 45 minutes of questions, comments, and debate. This format is aimed at enabling critical reflection and dialogue amongst researchers working on these and related phenomena.

NB: Each presentation lasts 15 minutes, with four presentations per panel run consecutively, followed by 45 minutes of debate

12.00 – 13.00	lunch (provided for all participants)
13.00 – 14.45	Panel 1 – Sex, Marriage, and Violence: Moralising Discourses and Actors’ strategies Chair: Jonathan Fisher (University of Birmingham) Presentations by: Holly Porter (London School of Economics), Allen Kiconco (Lecturer at Kyambogo University, Uganda), Annie Bunting (York University, Toronto, Canada), Ryan O’Byrne (University College London, PhD candidate)
14.45 – 15.00	Short break
15.00 – 16.45	Panel 2 – Children Born of War in Northern Uganda Chair: Sabine Lee (University of Birmingham) Presentations by: Ilse Derluyn (University of Ghent), Leen De Nutte (Ghent, PhD candidate), Beth W. Stewart (PhD Candidate, Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, University of British Columbia) Apio Eunice Otuko (PhD Candidate, University of Birmingham)
16.45 – 17.15	tea/coffee break
17.15 – 18.30	Keynote Lecture Erin Baines, Associate Professor, Liu Institute for Global Issues (UBC)

Detailed programme

13.00 – 14.45: Panel 1 – Sex, Marriage, and Violence: Moralising Discourses and Actors' Strategies

Chair: Jonathan Fisher (University of Birmingham)

Moral Spaces, and Sexual Transgression in Northern Uganda

Holly Porter, Visiting Fellow London School of Economics, and Lead Researcher for northern Uganda for the Justice and Security Research Programme

NB: will participate via Skype

When it comes to rape in the context of war, evocative language describing rape as a “weapon of war” and the female body as a battlefield is now commonplace. Yet scholars also note the similarities with violence before, during and after conflict, with a key issue being the relationship between rape in war and “normal” male-female relationships—in other words, between “the event” and “the ordinary.” This paper explores these relationships by considering sexual violence in Acholi, northern Uganda. Building on research focusing on forced sex from over seven years of fieldwork, the paper foregrounds the ways sexual violence variously works to continue, exaggerate and/or rupture “normal” social and gender orderings of Acholi society. However, examining rape and its aftermath solely through the prism of “the event” and “the ordinary” conveys only part of the picture: people carve out moral spaces of agency to assert moral probity, as modes of governance, and as ways of making sense of the choices and actions of themselves and others. Deliberate distinctions of different moral spaces work to separate events from essence and actions from morality. In Acholi, these moral spaces are delineated by temporalities (olden times, the time of war, the present, and a continuous, idealized Acholi life), which in turn are associated with specific physical localities (the village, the camp, the bush, town, and home). By mapping ideas of sexual norms and what constitutes sexual transgression onto these moral spaces – temporal and physical – this paper sheds light on the relationship between event and ordinary, rape and war.

Marriage after Return from the Lord's Resistance Army: Experiences of Female Ex-Abductees in Communities of Uganda

Allen Kiconco, Lecturer at Kyambogo University, Uganda

‘Forced marriage’ patterns and realities of abducted girls/young women within the guerilla Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) are considerably well documented. Research focusing on female ex-abductees' marriage realities after return from captivity is still limited. This presentation will discuss post-conflict marriage experiences, an emerging theme from qualitative interviews with female ex-abductees of the LRA in Acholi sub region of Uganda. After spending years in captivity, such women returned to a patriarchal society where marriage is life, with unmarried women receiving diminished respect and are kept at the Acholi periphery. To female ex-abductee women, marriage is an important determinant of progressive reintegration. But because of their military background, they are seen as

'stained' and 'unmarriageable'. Though the post-war changes to the institution of marriage make it significantly possible for this group of young women to casually engage in marriage, it remains difficult for them to culturally get married. Their interviews reveal high levels of stigmatization and intimate partner violence (IPV) forcing them to abandon even the informal unions. I suggest that the challenges and frustrations confronting their marriage aspirations are beyond their direct war participation, emerging from multiple influences including traditions, gender inequalities, unsupportive biological families and devastating poverty.

Temporality and Responsibility in Reading Conjugal Slavery Narratives: Case Studies from Uganda and Liberia

Annie Bunting, York University, Toronto, Canada

Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations, including victims of forced marriage, narrate their experiences of trauma for a variety of goals, audiences and outcomes. Giving testimony for the purpose of legal evidence is a very different exercise than for collective memory projects or for personal healing or biography. As researchers and human rights organizations, we also use narratives from survivors for a variety of different purposes – from policy recommendations to academic analysis – sometimes without attention to the context in which the statements are given. This paper explores notions of time, place and responsibility in forced marriage or conjugal slavery narratives from Uganda and Liberia to think about the (i) analytical challenges and (ii) legal limitations in making claims for government responsibility and reparations. This paper is based on interviews, conducted by Teddy Atim, Grace Achan, Jane Oweh, and Caroline Bowah, with women who were 'forced wives' during the conflicts in Uganda and Liberia and is very much a work in progress.

"We had the LRA in South Sudan too!" The (largely forgotten) South Sudanese dimensions of Uganda's LRA conflict

Ryan O'Byrne, University College London, PhD candidate

The LRA are infamous for their role in the widespread social and physical harm and displacement which predominantly beset the Acholi people of northern Uganda during the early 1980s to mid-2000s. However, for many Acholi across the border in what is now South Sudan, the fact this conflict also greatly disrupted and jeopardised their lives feels largely forgotten. Unfortunately, this analysis seems as true for academics interested in understanding the conflict and its continuing effects as for the myriad developmental organisations primarily interested in fetishized and Eurocentric notions of 'post-conflict' reconstruction. As many South Sudanese Acholi point out, northern Ugandan communities are awash with munu (Europeans), many of whom are asking the same questions and doing the same things, although few seem to be making much real difference and none are working north of the border. Yet, as they say, "We had the LRA in South Sudan too!" Therefore, by focusing on the South Sudanese Acholi community of Pajok, I describe the LRA's actions in South Sudan, discuss the regional effects of this conflict, and analyse its consequences for communities north of the border. In doing so, I highlight some of the similarities and differences in the conflict's dynamics north

of the border and highlight how these have affected South Sudanese communities differently, with a particular focus on gender.

14.45 – 15.00: short break

15.00 – 16.45: Panel 2 - Children Born of War in Northern Uganda

Chair: Sabine Lee (UoB)

A Relational Approach Towards the Psychosocial Wellbeing of War-affected Children in Northern Uganda

Ilse Derluyn, University of Ghent

Worldwide, about 250,000 children are employed in armed factions. Their time in the army or rebel group charges them with a range of difficult and possibly traumatizing experiences. Moreover, when returning from the armed group, they often encounter difficulties reintegrating into their community and familial context, in particular social processes of stigmatization, discrimination, and expulsion. In my presentation, I will frame these difficulties within the broader social context, where organized violence induces deeply rooted processes of collective trauma on entire communities. Elaborating on diverse initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration processes of former child soldiers, a relational approach is put forward to address possible gaps in current humanitarian approaches. Additionally, current gaps and possible ways forward in research studying this group, starting from a relational approach, are discussed.

“They now know that they are children of war”: Mothers balancing disclosure to their children born of war in Northern Uganda

Leen De Nutte, Ghent, PhD candidate

In recent years, several scholars have emphasized the need for a relational understanding of the impact of collective violence pointing to the myriad interconnections between individual and communal experiences and consequences. Consequently, the prolonged impact onto the social fabric of communities is perceived to be a central issue in research and practice both during and after collective violence.

During my field visits in Kitgum District, I have performed recurrent interviews with six women who have given birth to (a) child(ren) while in LRA captivity. During this presentation, I will elaborate on the careful balance these mothers repeatedly make regarding whether or not they should disclose to their children the context in which they were born. These findings give insight into the connectedness of individual and communal worlds supporting disclosure, non-disclosure or stages in between through, for example, processes of (potential) stigmatization and reconciliation. As such, I will discuss how the individual choices of these mothers are shaped – and often restricted – by their social and relational context.

"I feel out of place": The Negotiated Belonging of Children Born into the Lord's Resistance Army

Beth W. Stewart, PhD Candidate, Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, University of British Columbia

Children born of wartime sexual violence around the world inhabit precarious, contested social spaces in their communities. Scholarship about these children remains largely grounded in the experiences and perspectives of mothers. This paper examines the experiences of children in Northern Uganda born into the captivity of the rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Based on four years of participatory research (2011-2015) with a group of 30 such children (ages 11-15 in 2011, equal number of boys and girls) living in the urban area of Gulu town, this paper reflects on their experiences of 'unbelonging' and introduces several key strategies they employ to challenge the boundaries of their exclusion and negotiate a partial belonging. The children resist and challenge their marginality and refuse to accept it, but as they move closer to adulthood, their abilities to negotiate their legitimacy as full participants in their society weakens. Thus, despite their efforts, the children's negotiations during this critical and formative period in their lives reveal that their futures are deeply marked by their pasts.

Ex-combatants and the realities of motherhood in peacetime Lango

Apio Eunice Otuko, PhD Candidate, University of Birmingham

The paper examines the choices that some ex-combatant mothers made to renegotiate their positions in their post-war families and communities and how that affected the lives of their children. It argues that these women, given the narrow options they had, chose to reassert - rather than challenge - the dominant kinship rules and gender ideologies in their societies of origin. They believed that doing so would support and protect them and their children. By embracing 'traditional' Lango kinship/gender principles, they inevitably reproduced Lango patriarchal ideologies. However, they also tried to negotiate their aspirations and strategies following post-war reintegration into their families and communities.

16.45 – 17.15: coffee break

17.15 – 18.30: Keynote Lecture

Re-storying the Archive: Reflections on 'I am Evelyn Amony'

Erin Baines, Associate Professor, Liu Institute for Global Issues (UBC) is the editor of I Am Evelyn Amony: Reclaiming my life from the Lord's Resistance Army (by Evelyn Amony, U Wisconsin Press 2015) and Buried in the Heart: Women, Complex Victimhood and the War in Northern Uganda (Cambridge 2016).

To "re-story" dominant versions of history is to open up spaces for those who are silenced; to bear witness to their survival, resistance and reclamation of life. In this keynote address, I reflect on the

acts of witnessing and counter-war narratives offered in the memoir, "I am Evelyn Amony: Reclaiming my life from the LRA". I elaborate the global-local contexts to which the memoir responds, and the significance of its contributions towards questions of responsibility and justice. As the editor, I also reflect on how the author, Evelyn, and I approached the documentation of difficult knowledge in the process of giving testimony, and negotiated the ethical dilemmas of transcription, editing and publishing.

Other participants:

Elle Seymour (University of Birmingham), Boniface Ojok (University of Birmingham), Toni Smith (University of Birmingham), Joe Abell, John Oloa (All Saints University, Uganda), Rob Otim (FAPAD), Benedetta Rossi (UoB), Lukas Schretter (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, Austria) and Saskia Mitreuter (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Edgbaston Campus Map

Index to buildings by zone

Red Zone

- R1 Law Building
- R2 Frankland Building
- R3 Hills Building
- R4 Aston Webb - Lapworth Museum (Reopening 2016)
- R5 Aston Webb - B Block
- R6 Aston Webb - Great Hall
- R7 Aston Webb - Student Hub (Opening September 2015)
- R8 Physics West
- R9 Nuffield
- R10 Physics East
- R11 Medical Physics
- R12 Bramall Music Building
- R13 Poynting Building
- R14 Barber Institute of Fine Arts
- R15 Watson Building
- R16 Arts Building
- R17 Ashley Building
- R18 Strathcona Building
- R19 Education Building
- R20 J G Smith Building
- R21 Muirhead Tower
- R22 Main Library
- R23 University Centre
- R24 Staff House
- R25 Munrow Sports Centre
- R26 Geography
- R27 Biosciences Building
- R28 Murray Learning Centre
- R29 Postgraduate Centre (under construction)
- R30 New Library (under construction)

Blue Zone

- B1 Medical School
- B2 Institute of Biomedical Research including ICR West
- B3 Wellcome Clinical Research Facility
- B4 Robert Aitken Institute for Clinical Research
- B5 CRUK Institute for Cancer Studies and Denis Howell Building
- B6 Research Park
- B7 90 Vincent Drive
- B8 Henry Wellcome Building for Biomolecular NMR Spectroscopy
- B9 Medical Practice and Dental Centre
- B10 Advanced Therapies Facility
- B11 BioHub Birmingham
- B12 Health Sciences Research Centre (HSRC)

Orange Zone

- O1 The Guild of Students
- O2 St Francis Hall
- O3 University House
- O4 Ash House
- O5 Beech House
- O6 Cedar House
- O7 New Sports Development (under construction)

Green Zone

- G1 32 Pritchatts Road
- G2 31 Pritchatts Road
- G3 European Research Institute
- G4 3 Elms Road
- G5 Computer Centre
- G6 Metallurgy and Materials
- G7 IRC Net Shape Laboratory
- G8 Gilbert Kapp Building
- G9 52 Pritchatts Road
- G10 54 Pritchatts Road
- G11 Nicolson Building
- G12 Winterbourne House and Garden
- G15 Westmore
- G16 Priorsfield
- G19 Park House
- G20 Elms Plant
- G22 Elms Day Nursery
- Green Zone Conference Park
- G13 Horton Grange
- G14 Garth House
- G16 Lucas House
- G17 Peter Scott House

Yellow Zone

- Y1 Old Gymnasium
- Y2 Haworth Building
- Y3 Mechanical and Civil Engineering Building
- Y4 Terrace Huts
- Y5 Estates West
- Y6 Maintenance Building
- Y7 Grounds and Gardens
- Y8 Chemistry West
- Y9 Computer Science
- Y10 Alta Bioscience
- Y11 Chemical Engineering
- Y12 Biochemical Engineering
- Y13 Chemical Engineering Workshop
- Y14 Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences
- Y15 Civil Engineering Laboratories
- Y16 Occupational Health
- Y17 Public Health

