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Refugee hosting: Blessing or burden?

THE EFFECTS OF A REFUGEE INFLUX ON THE LIVELIHOODS
OF HOST COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF PALABEK,
UGANDA

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Disclaimer

This thesis was written to fulfil the graduation requirement of the master programme Human geography: conflicts, territories, and identities of the Radboud University. It was written under the supervision of prof. dr. ir. Mathijs van Leeuwen. The field research was facilitated by Youth Movers Uganda.

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Abstract

Refugee influxes are an all-time issue which has major consequences for all parties involved, yet the academic literature on the nature of the consequences an influx has on host communities' livelihoods still shows an undetermined debate. Arguments are made for both positive and negative impacts: proximity to refugees could increase markets and trade, and/or cause a general increase in quality and quantity of services, but also have negative environmental impacts through land degradation and/or increase violent tendencies between the refugees and local communities. Hence, the question is raised whether the benefits outweigh the negatives, what exactly these impacts are and the extent of them. This research aims to explore this academic debate regarding the impacts experienced by the host communities of refugee camps in Sub-Saharan Africa. The research seeks to do this through an analysis of socioeconomic effects experienced by the host communities as a result of the influx. A total of 36 in-depth interviews, fieldnotes and literature review comprise the data obtained in Palabek, Uganda. The effects are measured against the conceptual framework consisting of livelihood, social cohesion, and cooperation, to create a comprehensive overview of the socioeconomic effects of the influx experienced by host communities. The literature review shows primarily positive economic development for areas hosting refugees, but social effects are often negative or negated. The refugee influx in Palabek has attracted many third-party organisations: the UN, NGOs, and the government. This attraction has led to major changes in household agricultural production, safety, and access to services. It has both directly and indirectly benefitted the host communities in several economic ways. However, the results show that despite the economic growth and development the area and its residents have acquired, there is an overarching sentiment that spoils their experience. Host community members share a feeling of resentment over their societal position in relation to the refugees. They feel like second-rank citizens who are neglected by their own government and feel more affiliation with NGOs than the Office of the Prime Minister, representing their government. This sentiment is broadly carried along all relevant sectors and harms the social cohesion of the area. This shows the academic debate that whilst economic benefits may occur in proximity to hosting refugees, it is overshadowed by the of feeling like second-rank citizens. These findings should be considered in future research and policies in order to ensure a more social coherent structure for refugees and host communities in the long run.

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I would also like to thank Tom Kloosterman, with whose help I was able to get into contact with Flora Aling of Youth Movers Uganda, and without this I would never have been able to conduct my research in the way that I have. Hence, I would like to acknowledge and greatly thank the organisation of Youth Movers Uganda, for allowing me the opportunity to travel to Uganda and conduct research in an otherwise impossible-to-reach area. I would like to thank the entire team of Youth Movers, as everyone has done their absolute best to help me in my research.

I want to give out a special thanks to Flora Aling, who allowed me to stay in her home for the time in Gulu, as well as offering me the internship position. A special thanks to Daniel Genesis Bagonza, who has helped me in so many ways, from driving me around to translating to thinking along with my research and above all be a good friend to me. Once again, a great thank you to the entire team of Youth Movers Uganda, who made me feel at home and helped me in any way possible, and everybody who was always prepared to aid in whichever way they could.

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Preface

As a child my interest had always gone out to explore the world. The atlas would fascinate me for days on end, and I would spend a lot of time with my nose in the books. As I got older, and gained more freedom, I have tried to see and travel as much as possible. This thirst for world exploration had not been close to satisfied upon choosing my studies: rather, its one of the reasons why I chose it. The master Human Geography: conflicts, territories and identities has a morbid focus on conflicts and violence, with -of course- an aim at resolution. My personal interest in the world around us finds its core in the diversity that the world offers, from people to cultures to nature. Hence why I cannot phantom the pain we as people put each other through in terms of wars, conflicts, and general violence.

When the opportunity presented itself to conduct research in the form of a master thesis, I was eager to make the most of it. Being born a white male in Western Europe definitely makes your life a lot easier in many ways, and I certainly am aware of my privileged position. I am convinced that this should be exploited for the good, in aid of people or nature. On top of this I wanted to challenge myself, and conduct research in Africa, which is how I ended up with this research. With slivers of hopes of relieving even the tiniest bit of stress of people in need through the results obtained.

Via a friend, Tom, I got in contact with Flora Aling, the owner and boss of Youth Movers Uganda. This is a Ugandan-based NGO, that specialises in agriculture on youth-based programs. Empowering youth through the trainings and programs, optimising cultivation, and techniques. Flora offered me an internship and a roof over my head during the fieldwork, through which I was able to have this amazing experience.

I embarked on the field experience with an interest in host communities, and the effects the South Sudanese refugee influx has on the host communities of Palabek. However, my proposal was aimed very much at economic effects, such as job availability and markets. Throughout the research, the importance of social effects and especially social cohesion emerged. After critically reflecting on the emerged phenomena, in addition to the analysis offered through the grounded theory approach, I adjusted the interviews and focus accordingly. This offered a lot of new information and shifted the research orientation more toward a socio-economic lens, although the timeframe was too short to include lots of other social impacts.

Although the adjustment required some innovation and heavy shifting, the results provide a more comprehensive view of the effects as experienced by the host communities. The second-rank citizen sentiment, which prevails amongst locals, is an important effect of the influx and should not be neglected if long-term coexistence is desired. This effect remains largely unexplored in the relevant literature. The discourses found in the academic literature are primarily focused on economic effects such as market increase, landscape effects such as deforestation, or effects of violence increasing due to culture clashes. The establishment and general improvement of facilities and thereby increased quality of life has been one of the two main results of this research. The secondary result, which shows the second-rank citizen sentiment, is disregarded in the literature and therefore demands follow-up research to investigate the extent of these results.

The aim of this research is two-fold. On one hand it investigates the direct, economic effects of the refugee influx on the livelihoods of the host communities. On the other hand, it explores the social effects it has on the mentality amongst the locals. This research can be seen as an exploratory case study, which unveils the role stakeholder dynamics play in effects and how this can influence the social cohesion of an area hit by a sudden population boom. It can provide a foundation for additional studies on these effects in rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

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Chapter 1 | Research Overview

Introduction

The Ugandan government handles an open-door policy in terms of refugee intakes; everyone is welcome, without exception (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; UNDP, 2018a). Since their neighbouring country South Sudan has gained independence in 2011, many people have fled to Uganda due to new civil war and humanitarian crisis. Uganda has taken the duty of hosting and caring of fleeing refugees upon itself and has thereby received the most South Sudanese refugees of any country worldwide (UNHCR, 2020). Now, years after the official end of the South Sudanese civil war, Uganda is still taking in hundreds of new refugees each day.

As could be expected, the hosting of refugees brings along several challenges, as well as generally being a huge influential factor in the lives of the population in the hosting area. South Sudan currently ranks lowest at 191st in the Human Development Index of the UN, an indication of the poor state the country is in. Uganda at 166th scores better, but not nearly good enough to take over another country's problems, as both countries belong to the poorest, least developed 20% of the world (UNDP, 2022). Their rankings give an indication of the countries' economies and the state they fare in.

Characterising for poorer countries is the heavy dependency on agriculture. The underdeveloped nature of the country tends to lie at heart of the large agricultural business (Olanipekun et al., 2019). In 2019, 80% of Ugandan households was engaged in agriculture (UBOS, 2019). This percentage shows that agriculture is an integral part of Ugandan life and thereby livelihood. Many of the affected host communities are highly or even completely dependent on agriculture and cannot survive without it. Any negative changes could have devastating consequences. As overpopulation of the area brings along several challenges and obstacles, it cannot be left ignored (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; Olanipekun et al., 2019; UBOS, 2019). History has taught us a large refugee population can create several crises which can be ignited by an excessive population boom, like what happened in Rwanda pre-genocide in 1993 or in Jordan in 1970 (Lischer, 2005). The current situation in Northern Uganda isn't as fragile as the examples mentioned by Lischer (2005), but overpopulation of the area can easily lead to larger humanitarian crisis due to factors such as scarcity, competition, and land degradation. The Ugandan government has already expressed its concerns regarding safety in the area as well as general development, and humanitarian agencies active struggle to deliver and maintain bare necessities to refugees and host communities (UNDP, 2018b; UNHCR, 2020b).

A UNHCR (2023) report displays the distribution of refugees around Uganda as well as their origin. It follows a logical distribution: Congolese refugees tend to be hosted in the southwest of the country near the Congolese border, whereas almost all South Sudanese are hosted in the north, near the South Sudanese border (UNHCR, 2023). The map (figure 1) shows the unnatural population growth Uganda has experienced: hosting a total of 1,56 million refugees at the time (2023). An artificial population boom like this undoubtedly has major impacts on the livelihoods of the communities living in the areas the refugees are hosted. This has led to the research questions and helped shape this thesis.

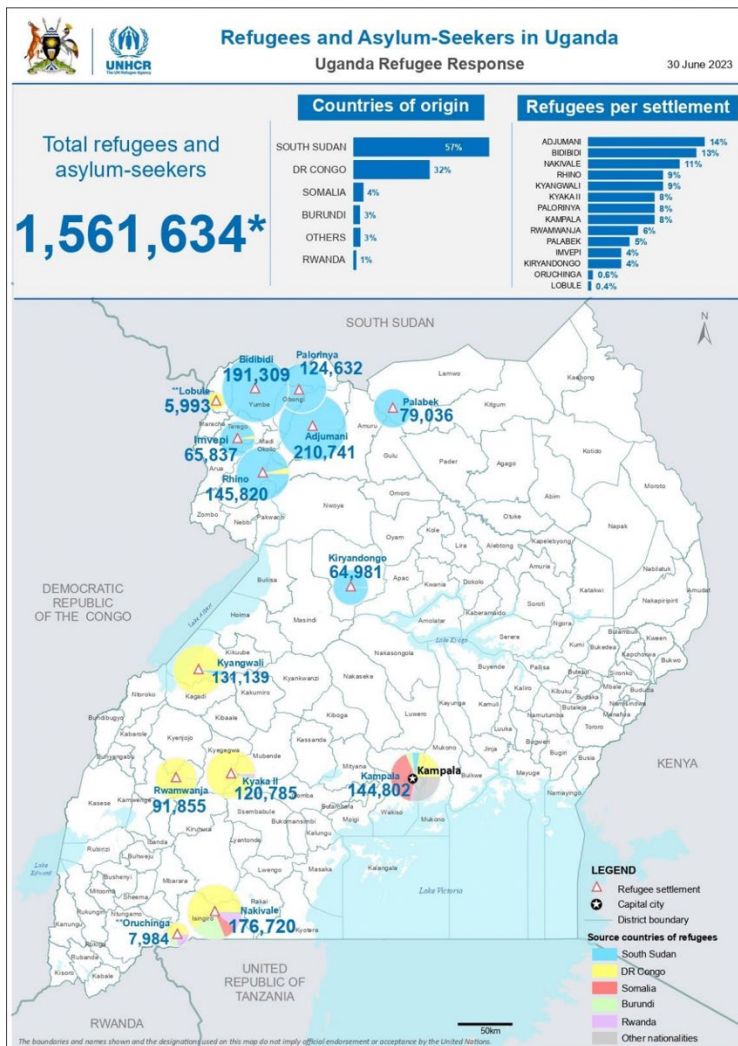


Figure 1 map showing Ugandan refugee numbers as of June 2023

The northern Acholi region of Uganda is affected the most, as it borders South Sudan and is responsible for the hosting and caring of the largest portion of South Sudanese refugees. The host communities are the communities that live together with the South Sudanese refugees, and generally interact and experience them the most. Therefore, the inevitable impact the refugee influx is felt most by the host communities. Is this impact solely negative or does the population increase also offer opportunities? Identifying and analysing both the negative and positive consequences of such an enormous influx can possibly address the challenges posed to the livelihoods of host communities. Simultaneously the balance is made up whether the positive influence outweighs the negative, or not.

Research question and objective

The research objective of this thesis is to map out the effects of the South Sudanese refugee influx on the livelihoods of the host communities in and around Palabek, hence the central research question below, by identifying, assessing, and evaluating the effects. This question is approached through the analysis of data obtained via documents, in-depth interviews and field notes collected in a 2,5-month research period. Additionally, this case can offer insights on the true effects of a refugee inflow on livelihoods of rural host communities.

What are the effects of the South Sudanese refugee influx on the livelihoods of the host communities in and around the Palabek refugee settlement?

To resolve the central research question, the discussion of the results aims to answer this set of sub-questions:

1. How are the host communities affected by the influx in their work life?
2. How has a change in safety affected the host communities?

3. How has the refugee influx affected the access to services of the host communities in the area?
4. What are personal encounters the host communities have experienced with the refugees?

Scientific relevance

The aim of the research is to improve the assessment process of positive and negative effects of refugee camps on the livelihoods of host communities and contribute to the academic debate. This is done by identifying and analysing the bilateral effects of the refugee crisis, through a socioeconomic lens. By taking both social and economic effects, a comprehensive view of the effects felt by the host communities can be created. This ensures valid research as no effects are excluded or disregarded due to its nature. Also, both social and economic effects are intertwined with one another and can influence each other. Taking both into consideration when conducting the research, by focusing on social effects in personal lives as well as economic effects within work lives, a socioeconomic lens is created that can offer a valuable insight in the academic discourse. The scientific value of this research is based upon this discourse found in the theoretical background. Currently the literature shows that there are several effects that relate to a refugee influx, both negative and positive. However, the discussion in academic literature is uncertain on whether the positive effects -such as improved markets and economic activity- outweigh the negative consequences -such as environmental constraints and social tensions between different ethnic groups- and to what extent. This research seeks to add to this debate and show where this research positions itself within the academic discourse. Are the effects applicable to Palabek at all and how does this effect the developments in terms of economic growth in the local communities? The socioeconomic lens this research has taken can be a valuable addition to the academic discussion, as the interviewing of host communities offers an insight into their feelings and perspectives on the suggested bilateral effects of the influx.

Societal relevance

The societal relevance is embedded in two pillars: (1) Youth Movers Uganda (YOMU) and (2) the case study. (1) The facilitator of this research is YOMU, a Ugandan non-governmental organisation that aims to educate youth on self-sustainability through several programs and trainings. The results of this research could help understand the effects and identify the gaps and challenges that should be addressed to improve the livelihood of the host communities in this particular area. (2) This research in Palabek refugee settlement could be considered a case study. The lessons learned from this research will probably be valuable to a certain extent for other sub-Saharan refugee camps in similar situations. This study has been executed in order to understand the discourses and effects of other camps in similar situations. It aims to take one specific setting and tries to add to the debate through the lessons learned in this case. It creates awareness on the questions that need to be asked in order to improve the situation and which aspects -that might otherwise be overlooked- require more attention. Thus, the research does not only help Palabek and YOMU in a direct sense but can also enhance the understanding of other camps and thereby improve them.

Structure of thesis

Following this introduction, chapter 2 will display the conceptual framework of this thesis, the light in which the results are analysed. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology handled to conduct the research. It contains reasoning for the methodology chosen as well as specific descriptions of the research process. Also the validity and ethics of the research are discussed. Chapter 4 shows the relevant literature and theoretical background of this thesis. This includes a discussion of the themes emerged from the literature review. Also, the regional setting of the research is described, as well as relevant background information to understand the context in which this research must be placed. Chapter 5 presents the results gained from the research, analysed in light of the literature review displayed in chapter 2. Alas, chapter 6 concludes the study with answers to the sub-questions and central research question. It is placed in the context of both the social as well as scientific relevance. This chapter also reflects on the research process and offers both limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 | Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this thesis revolves around three fundamental pillars: livelihood, social cohesion, and cooperation. These interconnected concepts serve as the foundation for understanding and analysing the overall well-being and resilience of the host communities under scrutiny. By delving into the intricate dynamics of livelihood, social cohesion, and cooperation this framework provides a nuanced lens through which to explore the multifaceted dimensions shaping the community's dynamics and eventually develop a well-fitting theory. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough examination of the interaction between economic activities, social bonds, and cooperative potential, ultimately contributing to a more holistic understanding of the host communities and refugees' dynamic.

Livelihood

Livelihood is a broad concept that can be defined in multiple ways. The dictionary defines it as “a means of earning money in order to live” (Oxford, 2012). However, the complete definition handled within this research is that of Chambers and Conway: “livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (natural, human, physical and financial) and activities required for survival and well-being” (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Well-being is added as it forms a crucial outcome of successful livelihood practices (Adato & Meinzen-Dick, 2002). On top of that, the capabilities and assets are not merely material assets. They include immaterial resources, such as social capital. This is necessary for long-term effectiveness. Added assets important for in the long run are opportunities and possibilities. People require a possibility of what could be in the future, without future it is meaningless. This has also been understood as such within the literature (Gidron, 2022; Kaiser, 2006; Kreibaum, 2014). Development is naturally coincided with opportunities, as education or better health care creates alternative chances and possibilities. Thus, in order to maintain livelihood, immaterial assets need to be incorporated within the definition of the concept, which is how it will be used as an analytical tool within this research. Also, the addition of general well-being encompasses the durability of a lifestyle (Adato & Meinzen-Dick, 2002; Chambers & Conway, 1992). The dictionary definition of livelihood, based on the pure survivability of a certain situation excludes the durability and immaterial assets, hence is not suited for the Ugandan case. Because the Ugandan open-door policy focusses a lot on the embracement of refugees and incorporation of them into the Ugandan community, the durability of livelihoods is essential for its effectiveness and success (Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019; Kreibaum, 2014). In the results chapter, the immaterial assets will be incorporated into the concept of livelihood and be used to analyse the results obtained.

Social Cohesion

The influx of South Sudanese refugees into Northern Uganda can have significant impacts on the social cohesion of the host communities. This can manifest in various ways, such as competition for resources, cultural clashes, and tensions between refugees and hosts (Kreibaum, 2014; Moorthy & Brathwaite, 2019; Wright & Moorthy, 2018). The concept of social cohesion can be used to analyse the extent to which the refugee influx is impacting the social fabric of the host communities and identify potential strategies for promoting peaceful coexistence (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019; Moorthy & Brathwaite, 2019; O’Byrne & Ogeno, 2021). The literature review showed the importance of social cohesion in many different ways, with an emphasis on the possible rising tensions between

the refugees and local communities. The differences between the groups could agitate in several ways, as well as the severity of it. Also, as Uganda's open-door policy is aimed at long-term hosting of refugees, the interaction between refugees and host communities is pivotal for the refugees' ability get along with the local economy and social habits/lifestyle (Kaiser, 2006; Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021). The probability of violence is also dependent on the success of the socio-economic integration of refugees and host communities together, in turn effecting the overall success of long-term humanitarian development in the area (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Dijkzeul, 2021; UNHCR, 2018; Wright & Moorthy, 2018). Important to note as well, is that social cohesion is not merely an issue between refugees and host communities, but also involves third parties. The cohesion between government, NGOs, UN, host communities and refugees is what constitutes the dynamics within such a camp. For this reason, the social cohesion analytical tool will also scrutinise the relationship between the different agencies present.

Cooperation

The last concept -cooperation- is heavily intertwined with the social cohesion concept. The literature review showed the importance of cooperation on all levels for development to occur and sustain. Huang et al. (2023) state that collaboration between all stakeholders has a higher chance of creating an equitable outcome, which proves to be more sustainable in the long run. The review also showed that the cooperation is pivotal for development to occur, because it requires synchronised and orchestrated execution (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Deng, 2021; Huang et al., 2023; Mabunda Baluku et al., 2021; Matovu et al., 2021). However, in line with social cohesion, it is important to keep the interplay in mind for all parties involved. This is emphasised in a paper by Ahimbisibwe (2019), which concludes with the possibility of division between groups as aid packages only serve refugees rather than all. This concept is further explored as a theme within the theoretical background because its importance arose during the literature review. The concept will also be used as an analytical tool in unison with social cohesion to determine the role and interconnectivity of parties involved and what effect this has on host communities.

Chapter 3 | Methodology

This thesis has adopted a qualitative research approach to data collection. It is a cross-sectional research design, as the limited time period demands research of particular phenomena at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2019; 't Hart et al., 2005). 't Hart et al. (2005) note three distinct characteristics that distinguish qualitative research from other types of research: meaningfulness, transparent research procedure, and the nature of the results. This chapter will explain the methodology used to conduct this research, and the theoretical foundation behind it.

Meaningfulness qualitative research maintains the assumption that people give meaning to their surroundings, and handle according to the meanings given to the surroundings. This includes everything that constitutes their surrounding: symbols, rules, objects, traditions, organisations, et cetera. Qualitative researchers want to describe the meanings and behaviours of the participants and thereby explain and understand it ('t Hart et al., 2005). In this design, meaningfulness has been incorporated through the in-depth informal interview style handled. This offered freedom to explore which aspect of their surroundings were meaningful to them, and to what extent.

Transparent research procedure in order for a researcher to find out what the perspective of participants is on their surroundings -called emic perspective-, he uses himself as research instrument. This refers to the researcher placing himself within the situation of the participants, to identify, assess and understand the surroundings of the participants as objectively and true as possible. One method of research is fieldwork. Qualitative research tends to use fieldwork such as participant observation or open interviews to attain information from the participants about their surroundings with as little intervention from the researcher as possible. The minimal intervention is of great importance, because any alteration to the original situation may harm or falsify the results due to the external influence. Flexibility is therefore also an important asset of the researcher. The researcher needs to be able to adapt quickly to new, relevant changes in the field which could prove beneficial to the research. If there was a standardisation of the method it would limit the researcher too much in his ability to investigate because of his inflexibility ('t Hart et al., 2005). During the fieldwork, I have been aware of my positionality and tried to limit my actions within the field to a minimum. My companion could aid me in this process, and also assist me in understanding the Ugandan culture. This helped with maintaining flexibility in last-minute changes or appointments. By familiarising myself with the people and the culture -such as attending church on Sundays-, I was able to understand their actions and maintain a transparent research procedure more than I would have without my companion.

Nature of the results 't Hart et al. (2005) names the nature of the results as the last distinctive characteristic of qualitative research. This form of research heavily relies on texts, whether they are transcribed interviews, fieldnotes or other written forms. Within the process of analysis, there needs to be space for the textual data. This is offered through the inductive analysis methods, which coheres strongly with the grounded theory approach that shall be explained later. Thematic analysis will be used to identify patterns and themes in the data collected through interviews and participant observation. This technique involves a systematic process of coding and categorising data to identify overarching themes and patterns. In this data process it will be executed through colour coding in initial and focused

coding (Bearman, 2019; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Saunders et al., 2019; 't Hart et al., 2005). From this data, explanations on the meaningfulness will be gathered, and eventually a theory will be drawn from the collected data. Within this format, the nature of the results have been preserved through the hybrid approach of coding. This shall be explained in the next section.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for multiple methods of research and contains two major variants: the first one expresses interest in the characteristics of language and communication. The second variant is called interpretative, and includes major research methods such as ethnography, grounded theory approach and case study. This form of research offers the researcher the possibility to explore *why* and *how* the participants give form and meaning to their situation. Because of the loose structure of this research design, exploring new themes and theories that emerge from the textual data creates informational insights. 't Hart et al. (2005) mention ethnography, grounded theory, and case study as the three most common and well-known approaches to a qualitative research design. This thesis has opted for grounded theory approach. This is done within a case study design, in order to encompass the transferability of the research. Also, the validity can be preserved, by the explicit statement that it revolves around a certain case study. The grounded theory approach shall be explained in the next section.

Grounded theory approach

Grounded theory can refer to both the Grounded Theory Method and a grounded theory approach. The Grounded Theory Method refers to data collection techniques and analysis methods (Saunders et al., 2019). In this research however is opted for a grounded theory approach, a methodological approach which is based around a strategic form of data collecting. It is used to develop theoretical explanations of social phenomena, and in doing so 'discover' or form a theory based off the data, according to the founders of the theory Glaser & Strauss (1967). Opposed to other methodology, grounded theory approach is a continuous cycle between data collection and analysis, after which a theory is formed as explained by Sanders et al. (2019).

Within the continuous cycle between data collection and analysis, coding is a crucial factor (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This research uses a hybrid between deductive and inductive coding, because both formats maintain different benefits and the hybrid system combines the two and creates a comprehensive, valid form of coding. Deductive coding is done from a predetermined set of codes, which have been categorised into multiple subcategories: work effects, safety, access to resources, institutions, personal experiences, and general effects. The guiding questions of the interviews all fall within one of these categories, to ensure a comprehensive view of the effects can be created from the data. Contrary to deductive coding, inductive coding is based upon what is found within the data. This offers the in-depth interviews space for the conversation to flow naturally, as well as maintaining a focused lens within the interviews through the deductive coding. Inductive is very useful for forming a theory based on data, hence its suitability with the grounded theory approach. Charmaz (2014 in Sanders et al., 2019) describes a flexible method of coding, which is used in this research through deductive and inductive coding: initial coding and focused coding. This strongly coheres with the continuous analysis of newly acquired data: each set of new data acquired is thereafter immediately analysed and coded through the initial coding. Initial

coding is a loose form of coding, based on themes that emerge from that specific set of data (Charmaz, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). After the data collection process is completed, the codes will be altered to focused coding and matched together through inductive analysis and coding. Focused codes are more direct, specific, and true to the conceptual framework - as discussed previously- (Charmaz, 2014). Essentially, this forms the basis of creating a grounded theory.

Primary data collection

The lion's share of this thesis consists of primary data collection through qualitative in-depth interviews. The remainder of primary data collection consists of observations and fieldnotes. The primary data was collected through fieldwork between March 23rd 2023 and June 5th 2023.

In-depth interviews:

A total of 36 in-depth interviews have been conducted over the course of a 2,5-month period. This forms the fundamental pillar of the data collected. The in-depth interviews can be categorised into two categories: (1) the host communities and (2) the NGOs. 30 members of several host communities were interviewed, as well as 6 spokespersons of various NGOs.

The selection of host communities was done by my companion Daniel at Youth Movers Uganda. Youth Movers Uganda have either previously or are currently giving programs and trainings to these host communities, and all are located within (or within vicinity of) the Palabek refugee settlement. The interviewees (anonymised) and little background information can be found in the appendix I. My companion also aided me in driving around and translating between English and Acholi if necessary.

The format of the interviews (as can be seen in the appendix II) is semi-structured. It is a loose format, and the questions were merely there to act as a guide within the conversation. Due to the loose structure, it offered the opportunity to open the conversation and ask follow-up questions to engage with the interviewees as the conversation progressed. I was able to grasp their ideas and feelings more through the conversational-style interview we had. Each interview took between one and two hours, essentially depending on the flow of the conversation and whether all questions were answered. The result of the in-depth interviews is an extensive and rich amount of information relevant to the host communities' experiences.

The in-depth interviews with the spokespersons of the NGOs proved less emotional and personal: this was more aimed at the functioning of the NGO and the role it plays within the landscape. There were questions aimed at the personal role of the spokespersons within the organisation and although helpful and a lot more personal, they cannot reflect the organisation in its entirety.

Observations and fieldnotes

In addition to the in-depth interviews, observations and fieldnotes have been made. These provided extensive reports on the surroundings and other possible relevant observations made during the field work. It can give a comprehensive overview of the position in which the interviews were conducted and the living situations of the host communities. The fieldnotes also include short snippets of small, informal conversations.

The fieldnotes and observations were written down in small notebooks I had with me all the time. These notes and observations were not coded, but merely used as an additional tool in order to support context and the meaning found in the collected data, in order to sketch a representative image of the fieldwork conducted.

Secondary data collection

To understand the context in which the events and fieldwork has taken place, secondary data has also been collected. This can be categorised into two categories: (1) academic literature and (2) government documentation. The academic literature is supporting the findings as well as providing context and added understanding of emerging themes from the data. It has also been used in preparation for this research, to identify the existing discourses and theories surrounding effects of refugee influxes. The government documentation mainly consists of reports and documents containing numeric data on the area. The secondary data supports the primary data through gaps in the information that the primary data might lack. The secondary data was collected through the online search engines Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and the Radboud University library database. The exact process of obtaining academic literature for the theoretical background can be found in Chapter 4, whereas an overview of *all* used literature can be found in the reference list.

Quality of research inquiry

To ensure that the methodology chosen for this research is suitable, it is necessary to conduct a quality control. Qualitative research needs to be assessed according to valid criteria, because qualitative research may not be able to be replicable in later research. This can be attributed to the fact that qualitative research, and all its findings can only claim certain statements when the timeframe and situation the research was conducted in, is taken into consideration (Saunders et al., 2019; 't Hart et al., 2005). The criteria to assess the research quality is based upon the criteria developed by Miles & Huberman (1994) as mentioned in Steinke (2004).

Criterion	Parallel scientific canon of inquiry	Assessment relative to the chosen methodology: grounded theory approach
Dependability <i>Refers to a clear account of all changes and data acquired.</i>	Reliability	Grounded theory approach can be considered reliable because of the transparent description of the actions undertaken throughout the fieldwork. Also, the fieldnotes taken can provide additional information.
Credibility <i>The content and data are valid and reliable and answers the research questions.</i>	Internal validity	Grounded theory approach invigorates the internal validity because of the continuous analysis throughout the research. The use of initial and focused coding also provides an extra layer of analysis, which removes any ambiguity regarding the answers to the research questions. Any

discourses or contradiction have been addressed and considered in the formation of the theory.

Transferability <i>Providing extensive descriptions of the methodology, processes, findings, and context for the ability of it to be transferred to other cases.</i>	External validity	The research proves externally valid through the description of the processes undertaken.
Action orientation <i>Collection of information and theories provides real-life usefulness and application into situation.</i>	Utilisation	The research conducted has been instigated by the NGO Youth Movers Uganda. The data and information collected can prove useful to the organisation in terms of effective policies. Also, the results provided can map out the effects of the refugee influx, and how the efficiency of YOMU's trainings and programs can be enhanced in order to improve the host communities' livelihoods.

Validity

The preservation of validity in any research is widely considered to be the most fundamental aspect of the entire process. This is because without the validation, the results of the research could be disregarded in their quality and trustworthiness. Validation offers the preservation of quality and trustworthiness through multiple techniques: triangulation and participant validation.

This research has used triangulation in a manner to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. This is done through the use of multiple sources of data and methods to cross-check and verify the findings. Observations, fieldnotes, in-depth interviews, academic literature research and government documentation analysis together encompass triangulation to persevere validity (Hamidani, 2019). Triangulation in combination with participant validation and initial and focused coding ensures that the findings are grounded in the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Participant validation has been applied throughout the interviews. The interviewees were asked confirming questions about the conversation, and at the end were also given a recap of the annotations made, as there were no transcripts yet for them to confirm. Their contact information has also been noted so the transcripts could be sent to them if desired.

Lastly, the validity is preserved through the use of a hybrid coding system: deductive and inductive coding. This method offers a thorough analysis of the data acquired, as well as ensuring valid data through hybrid coding.

Positionality as researcher

The awareness of your positionality as a researcher is of great importance, as you can unintentionally alter the results or maintain an adjusted interpretation of certain events or phenomena. Here follows a brief reflection, although the chapter 'conclusion' will address additional issues more extensively.

Being white attracts an unusual form of attention: many people in Palabek have never seen a white person before, so it draws some interest. I had to be aware that I might seem uncanny to certain people, and that my presence immediately put the focus on me and the person I was conversing with. I might also have come across as intimidating due to my different look, so I have always tried to minimise those possible effects through informal conversation upfront. Also, I don't speak Acholi, meaning that I relied completely on my companion Daniel to have conversations, as only an estimated 30% speaks English in Palabek (fieldnotes UN-meeting, March 30, 2023). This creates an alienated position for me as researcher, hence why there is no participant observation done as it cannot be executed without any bias or influence.

An attribute that I as a researcher needed to possess is reflexivity, in order to ensure my awareness of my own potential bias due to my position. I have reflected on my experiences, perspectives, and assumptions throughout the research, and on the possible influence on the results this may have. I have documented my own, personal experiences in a small notebook. These also included several biases and assumptions made beforehand, and how this has changed during the fieldwork. They merely consist of scribbles but provided me with enough self-knowledge to minimise my impact.

Ethics

The largest and most common ethical issues regarding fieldwork with participants include informed consent, anonymity and protection from harm. These general issues have been resolved through the informed consent form which can be seen in appendix III. This informs and asks the participants for their consent over the usage of their data, with the guarantee of anonymity, as well as ensuring their general safe being during their participation.

To ensure an ethically responsible research environment Ferdoush (2021) suggests extra ethical considerations need to be taken, especially when conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the Global South (even more as a researcher from the Global North). Reciprocity and responsibility are two important pillars within these extra precautions. An evaluation of the benefits outweighing the possible harms have continuously been done in order to ensure ethical stability. Although reciprocity could have offered a way of 'giving back' to the participants, it was not feasible in this research environment as large reciprocation of any sort would immediately intervene in the true effects on the livelihood of the participants. However, through responsibility some potential harms have been countered: by taking responsibility as a researcher and assessing the potential harms and risks the research could pose for the participants. There were no physical nor mental risks involved in this research, and the results can only benefit Youth Movers Uganda as a form of providing possible additional information in order to increase efficiency and provide a comprehensive overview of the effects on their subjects (Ferdoush, 2021). By providing an informed consent form the harmful consequences the participants might experience have been eliminated, as their anonymity is guaranteed. The knowledge that Youth Movers might have gained from this

research will benefit the participants as they are beneficiaries from the Youth Movers trainings and programs, which can benefit from increased quality and efficiency due to extended research on their beneficiaries' affected livelihoods (Bearman, 2019; Ferdoush, 2021; Hamidani, 2019)

Chapter 4 | Research context

Human Geography is a field of research which places most of its focus on relations humans maintain with space. This field is of importance to every single human being: we all take up space and most of us prefer some certain aspect of space or room over another. It is a cross-disciplinary field as it draws from many other fields to study people and their movements (Rosenfeld & Burtch, 2023). Politics, science, sociology, and economics are a few of the major disciplines that recur when investigating human geography. In the context of conflict, human geography maintains unique angles as this is often a time of uncertainty and change. The roles the other fields play in these situations are very intriguing. This research places itself within the existing literature across multiple of the aforementioned disciplines. Its positioning is subject to several key concepts (as discussed in chapter 2) and themes: livelihood, social cohesion, cooperation, work in rural Uganda, institutional cooperation, tensions between refugees and host communities, mobility of refugees, and economic opportunities. First, the research setting will be explained, after which the emerging themes from the literature review will be analysed before being concluded.

Research setting

To understand the setting in which this (field)research has taken place, it is important to sketch an image through background information. This section will discuss a brief history of Uganda, after which the Ugandan economy and politics will be examined. The brief history explains what has taken place in the country in the past decades and what type of experiences people carry around. The economy section elaborates on the current economic situation the country fares in, the build-up of their economy and the economic background. The politics paragraphs show the political state of the country and which policies influence are important to know to understand the setting of this research. Lastly a small section will explain the connection to and impacts on Palabek, before drawing a conclusion.

Brief history

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, bordering Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Congo, and South Sudan, and is home to nearly 50 million people. It has, as many other African nations, a troubled past. After gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, the country spiralled into decades of violent conflicts, perhaps most notably the military reign of dictator Idi Amin. An estimated 80.000 to 500.000 Ugandans died during his reign, which lasted from 1971 to 1979. A year after his regime ended, the Ugandan Bush War broke out. Within this year, two people and a presidential commission were installed and deinstalled to serve as head of state prior to Milton Obote taking office. The Ugandan Bush War was a devastating civil war fought between the regime of Obote and various rebel groups, most notorious being the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni. The Bush War officially ended in 1986 with an estimated 100.000 to 500.000 casualties, and the NRA won with Museveni taking the presidential office. The violence however continued, and eventually escalated into an unnamed civil war between Museveni's governmental army and rebels, which lasted from 1986 to 1994. The civil war ignited in northwest Uganda, and northern Uganda became a hotspot for violent rebel groups, one of them being the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony. The casualty estimates are lower than other, similar conflicts in the region (ranging from few thousands to several ten thousand) but is characterised by

the high number of displacements in northern Uganda and the cruelty of murders and crimes committed. Around 80% of the population of Gulu and Kitgum -two of the biggest cities in northern Uganda- was displaced (Lomo & Hovil, 2003). Whilst the war came to an official end in 1994, the violence did not. Museveni remained president and still is to this day. The LRA however continued its rebellious actions in Uganda, and thereby remained a liability in Museveni's reign. Kony is known for his ruthlessness, using kidnapped children as soldiers and not shying away from heinous attacks. From 1994-2005 several LRA insurgencies took place, particularly in the northern region of Uganda, close to then-Sudanese border. During this time, the Second Congo War occurred. The involvement of Uganda, partly occupying the DRC, led to major influxes of refugees to the country (Kreibaum, 2014). The violent outbreaks of rebel groups in northern Uganda - notably the LRA- have continued until the mid 2010s, whereafter it has remained relatively safe in Uganda. Lomo & Hovil (2003) state that the low number of casualties of the civil war and the sporadic outbreaks thereafter can be attributed to the type of psychological warfare that has been waged. Many of the (civilian) casualties have died to machetes or other gruesome murders rather than 'humane' bullets. The rebel groups, LRA especially, have used this to sow fear amongst the people of northern Uganda, which can still be felt and seen in the region today.

Ugandan economy

To understand the livelihood in which the research participants of this study engage, it is important to get familiar with the general economic background of Uganda. This can sketch an image of how their lifestyles are constructed and what means they use to make money. Agriculture is the single most essential industry of the Ugandan economy. The country has fared well in financial terms over the past decade, especially in comparison to neighbouring countries such as South Sudan and the DRC. It has averaged a GDP growth of 6,5% annually in the 1990s and 2000s (Newman et al., 2016). And although the country has known some tumultuous times in their recent history, it has still managed to grow as an economy and maintain this steady growth.

During the mid-1980s, Uganda prioritised economic stability over anything else, because of the conflicts and political instability the country had been through and essentially still was experiencing. After the stabilisation of the economy succeeded, the priorities in policies shifted toward economic growth and expansion. Tax reforms, liberalising the financial sector and the dismantling of state-owned industries and corporations have led to the steady annual economic GDP growth of 6,5% (Bamwesigye et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2023; Newman et al., 2016).

However, even with pro-market policies and macroeconomic stability in an attempt to industrialise, the country has failed to do so and is thus still heavily dependent on agriculture. This makes upscaling toward an industrialised society and economy tougher. The existing, larger industrial corporations are also mainly foreign-led, meaning that Uganda itself lacks the technology to progress and their workers lack the knowledge for research and development (Newman et al., 2016). This means that the country remains dependent on foreign, external aid through investment for technological advancements, and that the country as well as its inhabitants will remain dependant on agriculture for survival. In 2013, agriculture comprised 72% of Uganda's GDP of which the largest group is self-employed. This also means that there are no social or financial security nets such as retirement plans or insurance, that could be found when employed at a larger agricultural firm. It demonstrates how the economy is

revolved around agriculture, and how agriculture is their single most important economic aspect of livelihood (Bamwesigye et al., 2020; Deng, 2021; Newman et al., 2016).

Ugandan politics

A brief introduction to the Ugandan political climate is necessary to understand the position of the Ugandan government in relation to its citizens. Knowledge of the political history and current situation can explain the policies handled and the ideas envisioned by the government. Similar to the recent history, is Uganda's boisterous political climate in the past decades. After independence, the reigns of mainly Idi Amin and Obote, in combination with the consequential civil wars and general violence caused major political instability. This was largely resolved when Museveni's NRM came to power, as it stabilised the power vacuums that occurred after each (attempted) coupe. The political shift that Museveni's party brought along was of great extent. The political system was heavily centralised after years of unstable, authoritarian regimes. NRM expressed the desire to radically change the political system to decentralise and democratise, and to eradicate corruption in the legislative apparatus (Golooba-Mutebi, 2008). The policies used by NRM to decentralise between 1986-2006 were very ambitious and have proven effective to a certain extent (Golooba-Mutebi, 2008; Newman et al., 2016; Siggel & Ssemogerere, 2004). A bottom-up approach decision-making and top-down accountability approach has been fundamental to Uganda's local government reformation efficiency to ensure decisions lay with the lowest form of government: closest to the people. Top-down accountability ensures the higher-level councils take responsibility in their policies and account for the people below them. In recent years however, Uganda has implemented policies affecting lower-level councils and thereby counteracting the decentralisation and democratisation through previous approach policies. Golooba-Mutebi (2008) states that since decentralisation, shortcomings in popular participation have led to people being less able than previously assumed to keep their elected leaders accountable. This means that corruption has risen. This is not only true in the eyes of the public, as it also has been confirmed by former a minister of Ethics and Integrity (Matembe (2005) in Golooba-Mutebi, 2008), who claimed that since the turn of the century the Ugandan government has actively undermined the organs installed to combat corruption, increasing the problem. It begs the question whether the current situation isn't actually heavily centralised opposed to decentralised. The settlement policy, the open-door policy in particular, has the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) interfering with the refugees a lot: the restructuring of lands is a direct result of the OPM's policies. This was also noticeable in the Refugee Act of 09/10, when the government shifted its refugee policy from economic self-reliance to emphasising local integration. The success of the policy is debatable, as its success depends on the willingness of host communities to integrate refugees into their society and economy (Kreibaum, 2014). The apparent centralised power removes host communities' ability to voice their opinions and revokes their powers and can be considered a dangerous development. Uganda is currently still struggling with corruption, and although its political climate appears stable, the recent policy changes that undermine organs combatting corruption, and centralisation of authorities may indicate that the political stability is not an everlasting guarantee.

Palabek

As mentioned previously, Palabek is located in the Lamwo district in the north, part of the Acholi-subregion of Uganda and it is the location where the study was conducted. The region has changed significantly since the establishment of the refugee camp, with the area now

hosting over 75.000 refugees (UNHCR, 2021) This can primarily be seen in the transformation in scenery, and the added institutions such as schools, hospitals and roads.

Figure 2 displays the demarcation of the area as it was in 2018 (the black line – settlements). The settlement is located across the border from South Sudan, some 30 kilometres. Even though the official establishment of the refugee camp is only in 2016, refugees have been

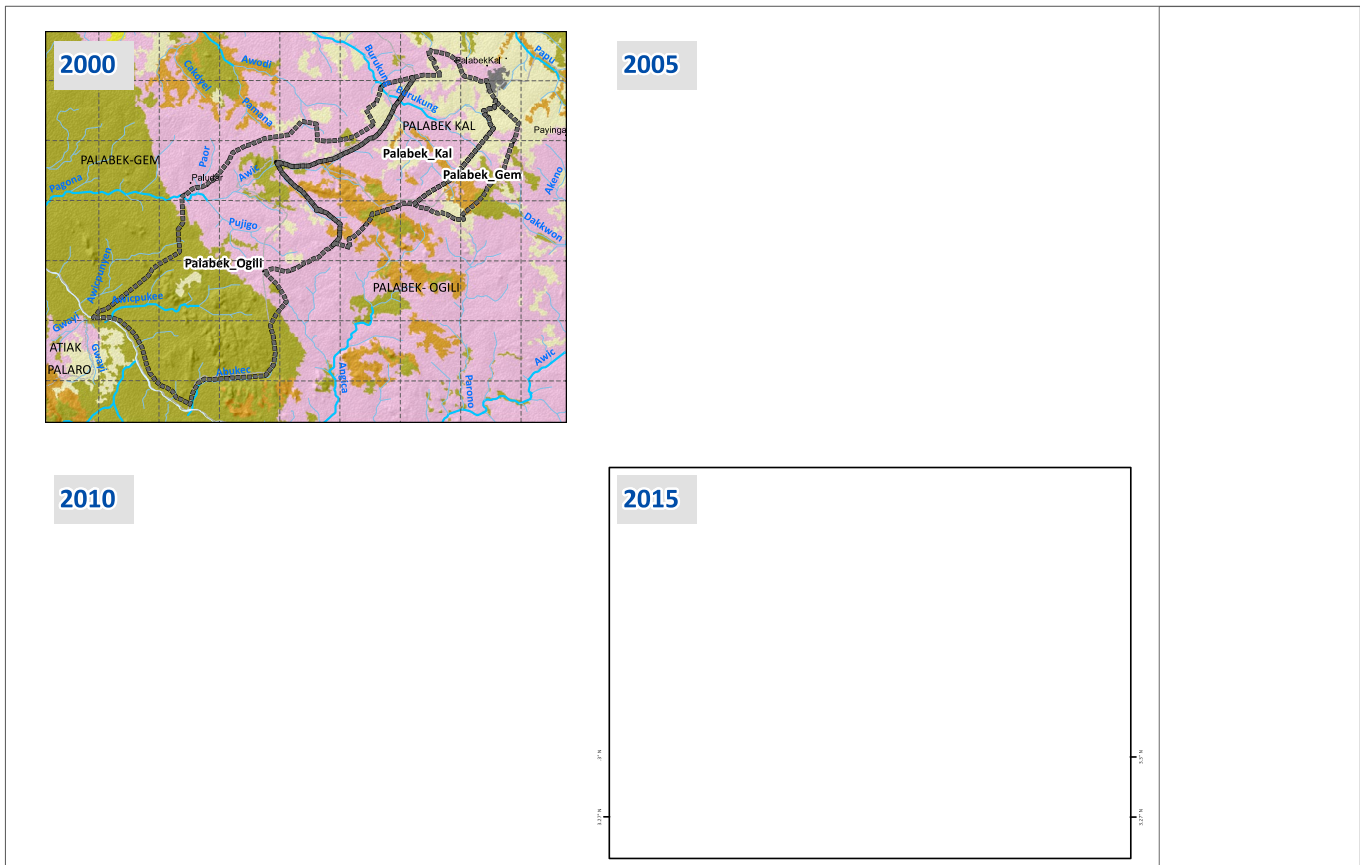


Figure 2 Palabek refugee settlement over the years

fleeing across the border to the area long before. It can be seen in the landscape in the area, as almost all forests (green on figure 2) have vanished because of deforestation, and many of the grasslands (pink and brownish) have turned into farmlands (light and dark yellow). The biggest change in the four images is 2015, one year before the official establishment. The UNHCR has stated that during the 2010s too many refugees had fled and some also settled in the area, that an official refugee camp was inevitable (UNHCR, 2020a, 2021). There are no updated maps available to indicate the change in scenery and landscape after 2015, but it can safely be assumed that almost all forests and taller trees within the area have been cut down to make way for farmland. Palabek is not unique in this transformation, as a study by Aron (2021) found similar results in another refugee camp in northern Uganda. The literature review has indicated that land transformation/degradation is a nearly inevitable aspect of refugee influx (Aron, 2021; UNDP, 2018a; van Blerk et al., 2021).

The climate in the area is typically dry, with the temperature varying between 25°C and 38°C all-year round. The vegetation in the area mainly consists of low bushes, medium-tall trees



Figure 3 typical landscape Palabek

and grass alternated with sand plains, as seen in Figure 3. Figure 2 demonstrates the immense change in vegetation between 2000 and 2015. Currently, all land that isn't used for farming at this moment looks like the scenery as depicted in Figure 3. The strong reliance on farming has impacted the nature, hence the losses of forests.

The open-door policy handled by the Ugandan government can also clearly be felt in the area. Being one of the top refugee-hosting African nations, it can become a burden. Ahimbisibwe (2019) mentions the little resources Uganda has and the little international support it receives. This makes hosting refugees quite a challenge, because aside from the resources, the infrastructure is also not adequate to handle large, unnatural population increases. The relatively developed North African countries do not feel the responsibility to take in more refugees despite what international treaties command, thus it becomes a burden of developing countries (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; O'Byrne, 2022). The UNHCR has appealed for more international funding, but it hasn't been sufficient thus far. Aside from the lack of responsibility from other countries, it can also partly be attributed to the Ugandan government and its policies. The authoritarian tendencies such as centralising legislative powers and counteracting corruption combatting by Museveni's government doesn't sit well with Western countries. Also, socio-economic norms that differ at its core value such as the newly passed anti-gay bill in Uganda, doesn't inspire Western and other countries to give international aid through resources or funding. The combination of all these factors makes the situation in Palabek all-the-more pressing (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Davis, 2019).

Livelihood host communities Palabek prior to influx

The research has taken place in Palabek, and to understand the effects the influx has brought about in the area, the livelihood of host communities prior to the influx needs to be known. As expected, the rural communities of Palabek followed the same trend as the general Ugandan economy and lifestyle: the vast majority of host communities were completely dependent on their cultivation for survival. An average day for any local in Palabek consisted of hours of cultivation, with the exception of market days to sell excess crops. This used to happen at most once a month. Every now and then there were expeditions in order to look for new water sources, which required days of searching and climbing. There was barely any time for leisure: wood needed to be chopped for cooking and dense bushes cut to create pathways to get around. If one required medicine or any other commodity, it was often a multi-day trip to reach the nearest hospital, institution or shop that could aid them. The remainder of the time was most often spent in church with their community.

Youth Movers Uganda

In order to put the research truly into context, the internship organisation that facilitated this research needs to be described. The importance of this background sketch is that Youth Movers Uganda (YOMU) was involved within the selection process of host communities, as solely their beneficiaries have been selected to incorporate into the research, as explained in Chapter 3. YOMU is a local, small-size NGO operating in Palabek, Gulu and Pabo. Palabek is currently their largest operation, which has a number of beneficiaries varying between 5 to 10 communities at any time, averaging 20 people per community. The organisation aims to create a society driven by youth. They want to achieve this by providing the youth with information, classes, programs, and trainings, teaching them about agriculture, sustainable cultivation, and general efficiency in their livelihood. They want to improve their agricultural livelihood, and eventually enable the youthful beneficiaries to self-sustainability in the long run. Also, they offer jobs in their own organisation for those interested, offering them the ability to learn to teach, and pass on the information they received through YOMU. It is an organisation both by and for youth. As their main point of interest is livelihood, they also belong to the livelihood sector from which they operate in Palabek. This sector is a cluster of NGOs active in the camp regarding livelihood, and they interchange information for collaboration to improve the general well-being in the area. This means that YOMU has trainings and classes in cooperation with other NGOs as well as their independent programs.

Academic literature collection process

The theoretical background has been retrieved via multiple online databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and the Radboud University library. As mentioned before, the Palabek refugee settlement has been understudied, hence the lack of relevant literature. This became truly apparent at the academic data collection. The data has been retrieved through a certain collection process, using certain key words as search terms: (1) "Palabek" AND "host communities", (2) "Palabek" AND "refugees", and (3) "Palabek" AND "host communities" AND "refugees". Through trial-and-error other phrases containing key words have been attempted, but most alternatives got zero results and could therefore be disregarded. The search term "Palabek" did generate more results, but almost all results were irrelevant to the research, hence the dismissal of this search term too. The first two search phrases (1) & (2)

have been applied to all databases but Google Scholar, as this is a less focused, more diverse and broader database. The first search phrase (1) “Palabek” AND “host communities” had 0 results at Scopus and RU library, and only 1 at Web of Science. The second search phrase (2) “Palabek” AND “refugees” resulted in 1 irrelevant paper at Scopus, 8 total at Web of Science of which 2 relevant and 3 results at RU library with 1 relevant study. Because of the minimal success rate, Google Scholar with a more extensive database was used. In order to specify the search radius, the third search phrase (3) “Palabek” AND “host communities” AND “refugees” has been used. It led to 60 results, of which 18 were considered useful. 42 were deemed irrelevant for various reasons: topics about (mental) health, pregnancies, gender inequalities, etc. A few were also simply inaccessible. Through the references of these 18 papers, an additional 8 papers have been retrieved, for a total of 26 papers. These additional papers often included studies conducted in similar, sub-Saharan refugee camps, hence their relevance. The reason why “sub-Saharan refugee camps” was not included within the search strings, is because of the large array of literature available and the spread being too wide. For this reason, the references of articles found via the search strings were also included within the literature review.

Theoretical background

This overview intends to display the available academic literature, as well as identify the emerging themes that form the foundation on which the grounded theory approach will build upon. Due to the lack of academic literature on the Palabek refugee settlement camp, the largest portion of literature consulted is either Uganda-based, has certain studies conducted in Palabek or is relevant in another matter to the key concepts of chapter 2 and/or the themes.

The theoretical foundation of this thesis is built upon an array of literature that display the multifaceted impacts a refugee influx can have on host communities. A few papers have studies conducted in Palabek, and others in similar, sub-Saharan camps. In the selected set of academic papers, several themes have emerged from the research. These themes together create a comprehensive image of the information and discourses seen in the relevant, academic literature. It encompasses the realm of work in rural communities in Uganda, shedding light on the economic dynamics and changes triggered by the refugee influx. Additionally, the theoretical framework examines the role of institutional cooperation, recognising its pivotal influence on shaping responses and outcomes in the host regions. Furthermore, the literature has unearthed the possible tensions between refugees and host communities in other cases, underlining the nuanced social dynamics that can either foster collaboration or fuel agitation, and could happen to Palabek. The mobility of refugees within the host communities and its implications on economic opportunities is discussed. The theoretical underpinning of this thesis aims to unravel the intricate threads connecting these themes, providing a comprehensive understanding of how the South Sudanese refugee influx effects the socio-economic fabric and thereby livelihood of host communities.

Work in rural Uganda

The academic literature paints a clear image of work in rural communities in Uganda: agriculture. However multiple important aspects have arisen in the literature review. Land degradation, institutional cooperation and people allocation all need to be taken into consideration to properly assess work conditions in Uganda’s rural communities.

The largest part of Uganda relies on agriculture, and an even larger part in rural communities. Crop cultivation is their main source of income, and because it is very labour-intensive work, it also takes up the largest part of the day for members of rural communities. Consequently, people are completely reliant on land for their livelihood. Several studies have indicated that land tends to degrade with refugee influxes (Aron, 2021; Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Dijkzeul, 2021; Price, 2020). Straightforward reasons are stated: more people require more land for crops and living space. Also less-obvious reasons are mentioned, such as the unfamiliarity refugees have with the area's nature which tends to them overusing the land through deforestation for wood fuel, overcultivation or imbalance in wheats (Aron, 2021; Gianvenuti et al., 2022). As mentioned in the research context, multiple refugee camps including Palabek suffer from land degradation. A study by Aron (2021) shows results which indicate that refugees cause a major increase in fuelwood consumption, through which woodlands and bushlands degrade as a result of the deforestation. It is also often regarded as one of the main risks involved prior to accepting refugees, and not seldom does that lead to actual exhaustion of the land (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; Kreibaum, 2014; Porter, 2020). On top of this, is also the emotional value land can hold; people can have affinity with certain areas, and the sudden influx of refugees, causing overcultivation and land degradation, can destroy these feelings (Gidron, 2022; Porter, 2020). The value of land should be taken greatly in consideration, especially because the condition it is in often proves priceless for rural communities (Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021). Aron (2021) concludes the study conducted with a recommendation to UNHCR and the Ugandan government to promote fuelwood-saving techniques, restrict refugees in certain areas and instigate programs to revitalise the land and counteract deforestation, which is supported by many other papers in the literature reviewed (Brun & Fábos, 2015; Gianvenuti et al., 2022; Kaiser, 2006; Kreibaum, 2014; van Blerk et al., 2021). Price (2020) adds to this by stating that the environmental degradation through visible changes such as forest and vegetation loss is not the only issue: water usage and sanitation cause problems to the land as well. It shows concerns as the policies on land allocation and usage are not suited for long-term habitation yet, but there are signs of improvement (Huang et al., 2023).

Institutional cooperation

The concept of 'cooperation' was derived from the theme of 'institutional cooperation' that emerged from the literature. The papers included indicated the importance of collaboration between institutions. In order to overcome the issues instigated by refugees, numerous organisations need to cooperate to ensure stability and socio-economic prosperity for refugees and host communities. Programs initiated by the UN, NGOs and the government aid in refugee camps. These support programs are often aimed at entrepreneurship, educational support and start capital, as mentioned in Mabunda Baluku et al. (2021). Multiple studies display the importance of cooperation between institutions in order to cater to the demands of the situation (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Deng, 2021; d'Errico et al., 2022; Dijkzeul, 2021; Huang et al., 2023; Mabunda Baluku et al., 2021; Matovu et al., 2021). d'Errico et al. (2022) even suggest that the direct interaction between refugees and host communities generates an increase in both output as well as diversity in economic activities. According to this theory it does only apply to a short radius of 5 kilometres surrounding, meaning the communities must live close to refugees to reap the economic benefits. The Ugandan government has also been known for using strategies to stimulate market creation and economic growth through policies and collaboration with other organisations. The importance of collaboration lies

within the versatility of refugee hosting in Uganda: it requires massive operations to be able to ensure adequate health systems, education, police, work and social opportunities for all the refugees, let alone the host communities (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Deng, 2021; Huang et al., 2023; Mabunda Baluku et al., 2021; Matovu et al., 2021).

A paper by Huang et al. (2023) proves that fruitful collaboration can lead to excellent transitions toward an equitable outcome. Policymakers from the UNHCR, World bank and Uganda have cooperated into shifting the traditional water system aimed at short-term humanitarian needs to a long-term holistic, sustainable approach incorporating both refugees and host communities. It currently serves 12% of host communities and refugees in the country, with ambition to rise. A study of Moorthy and Braithwaite (2019) also emphasises the international extent of hosting refugees. This study indicates that the flow of refugees tends to be the result of political conflicts and power struggles, due to the often-underlying political tension that has led to the necessity of fleeing. Thus, the authors suggest international cooperation to address the challenges of refugees and reemphasise the importance of research to coordinate global response to refugee problems (Moorthy & Braithwaite, 2019). Yet even though the literature shows the importance of collaboration, it simultaneously stresses the current lack of such coordinated responses on both international and national, as well as local levels.

A lack of collaboration and cooperation between institutions in Palabek is clearly visible in the land use and especially land allocation in refugee settlements in Uganda. Most of the host communities have given up parts of their land for the refugees to utilise for either living, cultivation or both (Aron, 2021; Dijkzeul, 2021; O'Byrne, 2022). And although there definitely is cooperation between the government, UNHCR and other NGOs, it is often insufficient for the host communities. The losses they have led with their land cuts as well as the added competition for resources and a disadvantage in terms of financial and humanitarian aid in comparison to refugees puts them in a very vulnerable position (Deng, 2021; O'Byrne, 2022). Ahimbisibwe, (2019) suggests that hosting refugees forms a burden on the local communities, which only increases as refugees get (humanitarian) aid, opposed to the host communities who are still also living in relatively poor conditions and the same harsh environment. The host communities are often already some of the poorest communities of Uganda, and these extra constraints on their livelihood makes it even more difficult to survive. The lack of collaboration worsens this situation through various reasons. Host communities are often 'expected' to give up land for refugees, which is often done voluntarily. Yet the government has no policies or rewards in place to compensate the host communities for their loss of lands, revenue and general safety regarding harvests. On top of that, reports show that the UNHCR provides aid packages to refugees through seeds, financial aid, health and food stamps. This puts the host communities at an even larger disadvantage. The literature suggests that this could also lead to tension between the host communities and the refugees, as the host communities might hold a grudge against the refugees over their lost land (Deng, 2021; O'Byrne, 2022; UNHCR, 2020b; Wright & Moorthy, 2018).

Tensions between refugees and host communities

The possible tension build-up between refugees and host communities is a regular recurring theme within the literature. Studies conducted in other refugee camps besides Palabek argue that there are several reasons which might cause the tensions to rise (Ahimbisibwe, 2019;

Deng, 2021; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021; Wright & Moorthy, 2018). Palabek however has remained fairly calm without too many violent outbursts or problems. The literature found through search engines generally focussed on gender and domestic violence which is alarming but has no relevance to the livelihood or the tensions between host communities and refugees in Palabek. However, the literature does suggest that there are multiple challenges that could pose problems in the future.

The access to resources is often already considered a bottleneck with which third-world-countries struggle. An added refugee influx makes the situation even more dire. A study by Wright and Moorthy (2018) claims that hosting refugees can lead to extra repression of said refugees by the host state, due to the increased competition for resources the refugees bring along. It can lead to tensions and conflicts between the refugees and the local host communities as the hosting communities might perceive the refugees as hostile additions to their environment or society. (Wright & Moorthy, 2018). There are institutions installed that attempt to minimise these issues, but the cooperation between these institutions remains pivotal. However, in Uganda there are some government policies in place to protect the host communities from entering extremely disadvantageous positions, the most important being the 70:30 principle. This rule states 30% of all refugee response assistance from all involved organisations should benefit host communities (Dijkzeul, 2021; UNHCR, 2018). Yet in spite of policies such as the 70:30 principle, constraints can still lead to agitation and eventual violence. It has been recorded to still create problems in other refugee camps in northern Uganda (Dijkzeul, 2021).

Mobility of refugees

The literature also mentions the mobility of refugees multiple times, even within the open-door policy of Uganda's government. The literature suggests that the freedom of movement is essential for refugees for them to be able to run along with the host country's economy (Kaiser, 2006; Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021). However the academic debate also indicates that the added population due to refugees also contains negative effects, and the freedom of movement for refugees tends to restrict the ability of growth and economic opportunities for the host communities (Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021; Porter, 2020; Wright & Moorthy, 2018). O'Byrne and Ogeno (2021) argue that the refugees should not be seen as passive victims but as active agents who could use their mobility as a resource to shape their lives. Their study aligns with others in the literature in terms of the importance of refugee freedom of mobility, but their suggested solution opposes other authors: O'Byrne and Ogeno (2021) emphasise the need for policymakers to recognise the agency of refugees and incorporate their perspectives into policy design. This solution is partially agreed to by certain authors (Kaiser, 2006; Kreibaum, 2014; Moorthy & Brathwaite, 2019; Wright & Moorthy, 2018) and completely refuted by others (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019), due to the lack of incorporation of host communities, who seem to succumb to the added competition and often missing out on aid too, because even with the 70:30 principle, this happening is inevitable according to the UNHCR (2018). The freedom of movement appears to be a large, influential factor for the integration of refugees according to the academic literature. Yet the backlash it creates for the hosting communities, who cannot keep up with the added competition whilst also missing out on aid, puts the complete freedom of movement in a different perspective. The study of Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe (2019) concludes that theoretically refugees have freedom of movement in Uganda, but that several gaps in the corresponding policies state otherwise, and question whether it is truly

beneficial to allow complete freedom of movement due to the socio-economic constraints the local communities experience from hosting refugees.

Economic opportunities

The academic literature has shown a multitude of challenges and discourses that a refugee influx brings about. Many of the aforementioned challenges have a negative connotation, but a refugee influx can also bring economic prosperity through its opportunities as seen in the literature. d'Errico et al. (2022) states that the proximity to refugees creates a new and larger market for the host communities to enter in. Their study claims that the proximity to refugees is increasing the general economic output of both refugees and host communities, thereby stimulating revenue and in turn improving living situations for host communities. Both agricultural as well as non-agricultural employment increases due to the extra population: host communities might find employment through retail and shop of refugees, and trading of crops is more commonly practiced too. Access to the labour market is a vital component of transitioning from short-term refugee response to long-term humanitarian development strategies for inclusion (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020). Carciotto & Ferraro (2020) argue that exclusion of refugees from labour markets has negative consequences, whereas the inclusion also creates jobs, opportunity, and revenue for both the host communities as well as the refugees. Additionally, it also stimulates the social cohesion through integration between the two groups, minimising the potential of violence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the theoretical background of this thesis sheds a light on the impacts of the South Sudanese refugee influx on the livelihoods of host communities. The combination of emerging themes, such as work in rural Uganda, institutional cooperation, tensions between refugees and host communities, mobility of refugees, and economic opportunities, forms the cornerstone of theory development.

The literature on work in rural Uganda underlines agriculture as the primary source of income for local communities. However, it also highlights the challenges arising from land degradation, emphasising the need for sustainable practices and interventions to mitigate environmental impacts. Institutional cooperation emerges as a crucial factor in addressing the complexities posed by the refugee influx. Collaborative efforts between NGOs, the UN, and the government are evident in programs aimed at supporting entrepreneurship, education, and capital initiatives. The literature emphasises that effective cooperation is vital for ensuring a positive impact on both refugees and host communities, and can actually lead to economic opportunities. Proximity to refugees creates new markets, stimulates economic output, and fosters social cohesion. The inclusion of refugees in labour markets is deemed crucial for long-term humanitarian development, creating jobs and generating revenue for both refugees and host communities.

Tensions between refugees and host communities also arise in the literature, particularly in the context of land use and allocation. While cooperation exists, it is often insufficient, leaving host communities vulnerable to losses and competition for resources. The lack of compensation and policies to safeguard host communities heighten these tensions, potentially leading to resentment. Mobility of refugees within the open-door policy of Uganda is a recurring theme, with literature suggesting its importance for refugees. However, debates

surround the negative effects of increased competition and the need for policies that consider the perspectives of both refugees and host communities.

Chapter 5 | Results

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to display and analyse the results of the field research, obtained between March 23rd 2023 and June 5th 2023. The findings presented are directly related to the research questions. The chapter is divided into four main topics: livelihood, safety, access to services, and social cohesion. These topics are important themes derived from the data and have proven to be the biggest influential factors of the influx. Each topic will be analysed in light of the theoretical background and academic discourses discussed in Chapter 2, and be supported by the data extracted from the fieldwork.

The primary data was collected through a set of 36 in-depth interviews: 30 interviews conducted with members of host communities in Palabek, and 6 with NGOs active in the settlement camp. Of the host community interviewees, 12 were male and 18 were female. The ages ranged between 20 and 64 with an average of 30 and median of 26. As expected, the work sector is in line with the general Ugandan working society distribution: 23 out of 30 interviewees were primarily farmers, and the other 7 practiced farming on the side of their main job. The interviews with the 6 NGOs are considered key interviews, as they can offer an alternative insight into the research. The interviewed NGOs are: Finnish Refugee Council (FRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Refugee Law Project (RLP), Rural Finance Initiative (RIFI) and Seed Effect Uganda (SEU).

Livelihood

Recalling sub-question 1 from chapter 1: “How are the host communities affected by the influx in their work life?” This sub-question is a vital tool in answering the central research question and this section will seek to find an answer to this particular sub-question. This section will delve into the findings that indicate the effects experienced by the host communities in their livelihood, with an emphasis on their ability to work. This section encompasses primarily economic effects on their household as direct consequences of the influx, and thereby their economic acvity.

The main source of income of the respondents is farming. They are dependent on their harvests, and often literally dependent on their cultivation for survival as the crops are their source of food security. Yet this vulnerability of the host communities has been one of the largest differences noticed after the refugees’ arrival. Many host communities have lost land to refugees, directly affecting their ability to farm, and thereby their livelihood. These land losses started when the first refugee arrived from South Sudan, around 2013. This was years prior to the official establishment of the camp. Losing land occurred in a few different manners. Most of the ‘early’ refugees received land which was voluntarily given to them by the host communities, as they were inclined to help those in need. However, as time progressed and refugees came flooding in large numbers, host communities were less eager to give away the continuously scarcer land plots. Since the official establishment of the camp in 2016, the host communities are forced to give up land to refugees to settle, even if involuntary. The host communities have indicated that the ownership of their lands is often not documented, but merely passed on through generations, meaning that they have no

bureaucratic support for their ownership. This has led to the forceful yield of the locals' lands to the refugees. The government claims bureaucratic ownership of the rural areas as there is no documentation denying this; hence why the government prevails in these instances. This is the reason why the biggest direct impact host communities have felt is the loss of their lands. Most interviewees have indicated that it doesn't particularly affect their direct survivability, as there used to be plenty of land for both groups to share, but it does have a significant impact on their ways, and a select few have changed jobs due to the lack of land available. Also, most of them have indicated that although they are often willing to share or at least help out the refugees, the increasing scarcity of the lands puts strains on their ability to work and on their household economy.

"We have been affected especially on our lands. There is not enough land for me and my family anymore for cultivation, because it is all given away to refugees. That is also why I have changed jobs to retail shop instead of farming." -Interviewee 3 (31-03-2023)

"[...] The arrival of the refugees has lowered the agricultural production in our community. There is a lot less land shared amongst us, as we gave a lot away to refugees. Now we also have to share our food, so that it definitely noticeable. [...]" -Interviewee 29 (20-04-2023)

The upper quotes showcase how the loss of land has affected the host communities. Lowered agricultural output is a direct consequence of less land to cultivate, in accordance with previously conducted studies (Aron, 2021; Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Price, 2020). The study of Aron (2021) shows that an influx leads excess deforestation due to the sudden increase of population in the area. This fast transformation in vegetation could also have an impact on the fertility of the area, although this obviously varies per climate and environment, so it cannot be stated with security that the same goes for Palabek. Carciotto & Ferraro (2020) and Price (2020) show that climate change also has an enormous impact, and this can even further strain the land which already deals with overpopulation and deforestation as a result of the influx. The importance of gradual population increase can be derived from these studies. The literature review has also revealed a lack of compensation toward host communities giving up land and emphasises the vulnerable position it creates for host communities in relation to refugees (Deng, 2021; O'Byrne, 2022). In the papers of both Deng (2021) and O'Byrne (2022) the recurring theme of clear partition between groups for aid packages is seen, a trend that Palabek follows all the same according to the data collected in the field. Respondents have clearly indicated that refugees get a prioritised treatment in aid due to their special status as war victims, whereas host communities also struggle -even more when losing their land- but aren't catered to in a similar fashion.

Host communities used to be able to rotate between their lands to prevent overcultivation of certain plots, but they are stripped of this possibility due to the loss of land. The rearrangement of land ownership has also restricted movements for host communities through the severe restructuring of pathways and crossings. The literature review revealed the importance of freedom of movement for long-term habitation of an area, especially for refugees (Kaiser, 2006; Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021). Kaiser (2006) argues that denying refuge freedom of movement undermines their socioeconomic rights in the host country and refutes their ability to economic growth and long-term stability. O'Byrne & Ogeno (2021) and Kreibaum (2014) agree with this statement but mention that the integration and freedom should not go at the expense of the host communities. This needs to be considered,

as the results from Palabek show that the host communities are sometimes denied in their freedom. According to the literature review, this could negatively impact the local household economies, and eventually have damaging consequences for long-term coexistence. However, generally interviewees agreed that the current status quo is much better than previously and perhaps for the better, as relevant academic papers appointed complete freedom of movement for refugees restrict the host communities' ability to attain economic growth (Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021; Porter, 2020; Wright & Moorthy, 2018). However, as older pathways have been replaced by newer and better access roads, by either the government or the UN, the restriction on certain movements isn't the quintessential problem described in the literature according to the data. The road system has been a major improvement to Palabek. Before the refugee influx, there used to be barely any type of infrastructure at all, and people had to literally cut their way through dense bushes to get to their destination. The current system is not perfect nor paved, but it is a great improvement. It now allows people to move around quicker with their commodities, in order to reach (different) markets and sell their crops. This has increased sales and general revenue, with people upping their income, and eased trading massively due to the new roads.

"[...] Also the access roads have changed our community. People can now follow you home so you can sell your stuff there, and you don't have to move everything to the market and back if you don't want to. The accessibility has improved all around." -Interviewee 17 (05-04-2023)

"Better access to education, better medicines, and roads. If you saw what it was like before, and you see what it is now, you'll know what I mean. It is a world of difference for how much this place has changed and developed in the last few years." -Interviewee 23 (19-04-2023)

Controversially, the host communities both state an increase and decrease in freedom of movement after the arrival of the refugees. The roads have brought development through its accessibility, and the freedom of movement has improved immensely for host communities. It offers new opportunities through trade and markets, as well as improvements of the quality of life through easier access to medication and education. The developments should benefit both refugees and host communities, in order to grant economic growth and opportunities for both groups. A discourse in the literature was found regarding the value of mobility of refugees in various studies for economic gains and general development, in which Ahimbisibwe (2019) and Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe (2019) explicitly stated that host communities should be included, in order to prevent lopsided growth between refugees and host communities. The network of roads that is constructed has been one of the biggest advancements in the area, and literally paved the way for development. In accordance with the literature, the road system is publicly accessible (Kreibaum, 2014; O'Byrne & Ogeno, 2021; Porter, 2020; Wright & Moorthy, 2018). The loss of land, added rules,



Figure 4 road after rainfall

restructuring of pathways and restrictions on movement in some places argue against an increase in movement freedom. The general consensus however remains that it is a great improvement.

Although the loss of land is often mentioned by host communities as an impactful event on the area, the deforestation has had a bigger physical effect felt by the communities. Cutting down trees without intention of replanting has caused the area to feel void and removed most opportunities to hide in the shade. The lack of replanting has now caused scarcity of firewood, which never happened before as the host communities were careful in monitoring and consequently replanting any vegetation that was cut down. A study by Aron (2021) already exposed the vulnerability of vegetation in refugee influxes, and still Palabek has created the same problem for itself.

“The refugees destroy vegetation; they do not treat the ground and lands with respect such is necessary as farmers. Also, there is a lack of firewood because they have cut down all the trees. If you look behind you, you can see how many tree stumps there are, because of everything that they cut down.” -Interviewee 1 (31-03-2023)

The deforestation has had massive consequences in the outlook of the area (as could be seen from figure 2 in chapter 4). The forests are almost all completely gone, much to the dismay of the host communities, increasing tensions between them on several occasions. This has an effect on the social fabric between the two groups, and could form an obstacle for long-term, effective, and peaceful social cohesion. There are policies in place from the settlement’s board (Fieldnotes 30-03-2023), but these are clearly ineffective in trying to prevent the



Figure 5 average community in Palabek. This one belongs to locals

refugees from cutting down trees. Previous studies have already concluded that land degradation is a direct consequence of refugee influxes, but the current camp board has failed to anticipate on it (Aron, 2021; Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Dijkzeul, 2021; Price, 2020). The quick and major changes to the environment have caused many host communities to hold some resentment toward the refugees because of the unwelcome changes in the landscape. An improvement visible from the data is the installation of numerous water taps and boreholes in the area. As stated in chapter 4, the climate in Palabek is known for its dry- and aridness, which used to pose a problem for the communities living there.

"[...] We would always search the area and climb hills to see if there was a water source on top of a hill or something. It would take very long for us to find. Now the access is very easy, as there are new boreholes made and water taps installed at the refugee's place so we could also go there if we want to. We don't have to go looking for it, it's a huge improvement." - Interviewee 27 (20-04-2023)



Figure 6 old water source, not in use anymore

Almost all interviewees have stated that there have been new water taps/boreholes installed nearby, providing their communities with sufficient, healthy water. Also, the taps provide one static point where water can be retrieved, meaning that the days of searching for water are gone for the host communities. This saves a lot of time according to the interviewees for alternative activities: either working (through land cultivation), leisure or trading on markets. The situation has improved tremendously regarding the water situation for host communities. The importance of resolving water issues has also been emphasised by Price (2020), exemplary for the development Palabek has made in the past years.

In conclusion, the impact of refugee influx on the work life of host communities is multifaceted, with both challenges and improvements evident. The loss of land, a vital part for farming, has been a significant concern among the host communities, leading to changes in livelihoods for some individuals. However, the development of infrastructure, particularly the construction of access roads, has created new opportunities for trade and increased mobility, enhancing overall economic prospects. In spite of a few concerns about restricted movement in certain areas, the general consensus is that the improvements in accessibility outweigh the limitations. This has direct positive effects on the livelihood of people, as well as the social cohesion that is stimulated by the eased movement through pathways. Moreover the environmental impacts, notably deforestation, have added strain to host communities, slightly increasing tensions and diminishing natural resources such as firewood. This, in combination with the loss of land, does affect the social cohesion between refugees and host communities. The needs of the local communities need to be addressed in order to promote integration and interaction and maintain long-term peaceful coexistence. Yet, amidst these challenges, positive developments such as the installation of water taps and boreholes have relieved the longstanding issues of water scarcity, providing communities with essential

resources, and saving valuable time previously spent searching for water sources. In essence, while the influx of refugees has presented its share of challenges to host communities' livelihoods, it has also spurred infrastructural improvements and resource access, ultimately contributing to the overall development and improvements of the livelihoods of the host communities.

Safety

This section is dedicated to display the findings in relation to sub-question 2: "How has a change in safety affected the host communities?" in an attempt to answer it. This sub-chapter will delve into the changes experienced by the host communities, and in what way this has affected them. It can be considered a subjective topic, but still a socioeconomic lens is used to determine the true effects as the combination of both social and economic impact is important for a comprehensive analysis.

Since the arrival of the refugees, theft has become a bigger issue than it ever was before and has been mentioned extensively in the data. Many of the interviewees have had personal encounters with refugees stealing their crops, and this directly correlates to the concepts of social cohesion and livelihood. On several occasions have harvests been destroyed by the refugees or has simple stealing of harvested crops caused host communities to experience insufficient food on multiple occasions.

"Yes, they have raided my cassava garden. They do not fear anything, the refugees. They pick fruits and pluck other things from your trees in your garden without asking." - Interviewee 6 (03-04-2023)

The quote above is no exception: similar events have been mentioned repeatedly, showcasing the impact the added population has had on host communities' ability to farm and maintain their livelihood. The constraints the extra population puts on the land and the scarce resources often leads to tensions between locals and refugees, as explored by Wright & Moorthy (2018). Suggested solutions involve more cooperation between institutions, as this offers a bigger view of the problems and might also offer institutions the ability to divide the tasks into their respective organisations.

Some people have moved their plots further away from home, in order to be able to cultivate in a more sheltered place which cannot be trashed or raided by the refugees. Others have tried acting against the refugees through the police, but mostly to no avail.

"There are police around, but they are siding with the refugees all the time. We cannot come to them about our crops being stolen or gardens destroyed, because they will choose the side of the refugees. I think there should be more police, but more importantly, the police should do more community stuff. They should be more involved in our lives and helping us more, because now we have no use from them." -Interviewee 4 (03-04-2023)

This notion has often come forward in the interviews. The police force tends to side with the refugees, whilst simultaneously there is too little police. They are not involved in any community quarrels, which often raised the question in the interviews what exactly their job entails, if not resolving fights and other issues? Despite numerous attempts, there was no-

one who could or wanted to give a proper answer to this question during the fieldwork. Additionally, almost all respondents voiced their desire for more police forces, and some even asked for police at all, as there is way too little in the area.

“There are no police here, they are at the sub-county office where they have their headquarters. I feel like they should be here, because their presence alone makes the place calm and feel safer.” -Interviewee 24 (19-04-2023)

The upper quote gives an indication of how little police activity there is in the area, and the desire of people to have police around. Even with little intervention, their presence would contribute to the feeling of safety in Palabek. Throughout the fieldwork, 1 police station and a few minor outposts were spotted, all at least 15km away from each other and far away from any communities, neither refugees nor hosts, making it difficult to reach the people in need and provide security through presence. In order to counteract this, host communities have taken matters into their own hands.



Figure 7 the only police station spotted during fieldwork

“Within our community there is no police. There is a team from the community established with mostly younger guys that are trained to handle certain issues and sort of maintain security.” -Interviewee 22 (19-04-2023)

Multiple communities have formed these security teams from members of their own community, in order to guarantee the safety of their peers. It highlights how overwhelmed

the police force currently is. These amateur security teams established from the community disrupts the guys' ability to cultivate and maintain their livelihood, as well as putting more pressure on their family members to maintain the agricultural output with fewer people working the land. However, it also shows the resilience of host communities and the personal empowerment they have gained since the influx. They used to be solely reliant on the negligent police but have managed to establish relative safety at their own initiative. The data shows how the change in safety after the influx directly interferes with the way of life in Palabek. Also, the lack of police agents present and the general sentiment of second-rank citizens amongst host communities is poignant when considering violence in the area is considered a problem. Violence has been mentioned an astonishing 61 times within the 36 conducted interviews. Many of the interviewees responded with negative experiences or general fear in the area because of the refugees.

"I feel like they (the refugees) should stay, but they should be limited in their actions like vandalising, because that still happens a lot. Also they are rude sometimes, so they should do something about that." -Interviewee 11 (04-04-2023)

The cultural differences have often been appointed as possible causes for the clashes. The refugees come from South Sudan, which is still heavily conflicted with a civil war. Many host communities claim this to be the reason for their violent behaviour, although this cannot be objectively confirmed. However, this belief does resonate the shared feeling of a clear distinguishment between host communities and refugees, and further damages the social cohesion in the area. In order to rectify this, international cooperation for refugee responses is mentioned in the literature. Moorthy & Brathwaite (2019) have suggested coordinated responses in order to counteract possible tensions as well as provide political stability for both refugees and host communities in uncertain times. Palabek however has failed to do so in many regards, especially institutional cooperation on national level. According to the data and in the field, the government communicates too little for fruitful collaboration to occur. On individual scale, the cooperation and interaction between refugees and host communities -essential for long-term peaceful coexistence- is rough at the moment. Social cohesion is not stimulated as the inability to talk to the refugees makes it difficult to resolve problems through verbal communication, as the host communities convey through their answers.

"[...] Lots of fights. The refugees don't talk, they start fights with anyone who confronts them. I think it is because they come from a country of lawlessness, and they are used to being violent and not used to any laws. They don't know what it is, realise what their actions are doing to people." -Interviewee 16 (05-04-2023)

Not only does the 'country of lawlessness' still exercise its influence in Palabek, but the influx has also increased violence due to a multitude of other reasons, of which the previously discussed land loss still appears to be a sensitive issue which causes tension between the host communities and the refugees. The loss of land is sometimes labelled as 'stolen by the refugees' by the host communities, which indicates how it is perceived by the host communities. This might led to long-term resentment, which again harms the interpersonal relationships between the groups and further hurts the social cohesion. On top of that, many interviewees stated that romantic interests were pursued by both refugees and members of host communities. Some marriages have been lost due to men or women from host

communities cohabiting with refugees and vice versa. Although this is generally inevitable in a situation with an influx, it is evident of the sentiment that rules amongst host communities that the respondents put the blame on the refugees, rather than a shared blame by both parties. Also some families are adamant of accepting intermarriages or even relationships, increasing friction between refugees and host communities and in-between families all the more. This issue didn't come forward as a major instigator to increasing tensions in the literature review. However, despite the overarching negative feelings the host communities have experienced regarding theft and violence because of the refugees, multiple interviewees have also responded with a more positive outlook and understanding of their behaviour.

“There have been some safety changes. It has improved. Even though they destroy crops, if you talk to them, you can actually befriend them and also explain that what they are doing is not nice. And after you have befriended them, they are actually very helpful people, and this has done a lot of good for the safety in the area.” -Interviewee 6 (03-04-2023)

Interestingly, the snippet above is from interview 6, in which she has also mentioned that their cassava garden has been raided. It is indicative of how the host communities are still willing interact and engage with refugees, despite the overarching negative sentiment that can be extracted from the data. This attitude definitely has a positive effect on the social cohesion between the groups. However, this good will and spirit is not maintained for the government and the police, as nearly all host communities still feel the neglect of the police force, and demand better service.

In conclusion, the influx of refugees into the host communities has brought about significant challenges, particularly in terms of safety. The data shows an increase in theft, causing considerable disruption to the livelihoods of the host communities. Despite efforts to seek assistance from the police, many interviewees expressed frustration with the lack of police presence and perceived bias towards the refugees. The formation of community security teams highlights the proactive measures taken by the host communities to address their safety concerns in the absence of adequate police support, as well as show the personal empowerment developed after the influx by host communities. However, the prevalent sense of vulnerability persists, possibly caused by the high incidence of violence reported in the interviews. The partition between the groups is noticeable as host communities often appoint refugees for a lot of problems, even when it cannot be concluded that only the refugees are at fault. This could damage social cohesion and interaction in the long run. However despite the challenges, some interviewees expressed a willingness to engage with the refugees and maintain positive relationships, recognising the potential for mutual understanding and cooperation, and strengthening social cohesion.

In essence, while the arrival of refugees has presented significant safety challenges for the host communities, hope remains for improved relations through dialogue and understanding. This should lower the number of incidents in the area according to the host communities, and aid them in retaining their livelihood, which can currently still be disrupted by the refugees. There are both positive and negative consequences, especially regarding the social fabric of the area, which is a recurring theme in each section in the data. To address the underlying issues, it requires efforts of both local and national authorities -and cooperation- to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents in the area.

Access to services

This section is dedicated to answering sub-question 3 “How has the refugee influx affected the access to services in the area?” Services refers to both resources and institutions. This encompasses clothing and medicine, but also schools and hospitals. Changes in services can heavily influence the livelihoods of host communities as it directly impacts their survivability and relates to the concepts of livelihood and social cohesion. The data shows clear changes in the availability and accessibility of services, which can be seen as a direct consequence of the influx. Also, the changes in dynamics of institutions regarding host communities will be scrutinised according to the data. This will be analysed in light of the cooperation concept. The changes in services, albeit resources or institutions, will be related back to the theoretical background.

The accessibility of resources has undergone an immense change, evident from the data. Many markets have been established after the arrival of the refugees. This has had an enormous impact on the livelihoods of the host communities, as this opens up a realm of possibilities in economic terms. The rise of markets in the area has offered host communities the opportunity to sell their fruits and vegetables instead of letting it go to waste. It earns them extra cash and is a positive change within their household. Not only does it allow them to earn extra, but it also offers them access to alternative fruits and vegetables. This enhances the variety in their diet and could possibly contribute to health improvements in general.

“For food we always used to depend solely on our garden. Now there are new markets nearby, so we can also go there and buy food. This is especially useful to buy food that we don’t grow in our garden.” -Interviewee 12 (04-04-2023)

The option of going to the market also creates a certain ‘safety net’ for the host communities, as the extra cash earned can be saved in case of a bad harvest. Nowadays people can go to the market to buy food if their harvest fails, which used to be a near-death sentence before the influx. This rise of markets is not completely unexpected. A theory developed by d’Errico et al. (2022) states that the proximity of refugees creates new and larger markets for host communities to enter. These research-based claims conclude that refugees often have positive impact on the local economy due to the growth. Palabek follows a very similar pattern to the theory described in the paper of d’Errico et al. (2022). Also, the roads have made the access toward the new markets easier, creating a cumulative improvement for trade and economic growth in the area. This shows how the improvements in different aspects work together and improve the situation in itself all the more. The importance of the accessibility to markets is pivotal for long-term humanitarian development strategies (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020). Carciotto & Ferraro (2020) indicate that access to markets and trades offer a variety of opportunities for both social and economic growth, needed for the transition of short-term habitation and aid to long-term. Additionally, it stimulates social cohesion between refugees and host communities, also needed for long-term habitation.

The road improvements are an important factor in almost all sub-questions, as it offers host communities more freedom and time. But the road system is not the only development brought to the area. The UN, the government and multiple NGOs have flocked to Palabek to aid the refugees since the influx. The data has indicated that this has had major impacts on

the lives of host communities. The development of the area has created many new opportunities for the host communities to receive education and empower themselves. The population boom and the establishment of the refugee camp has initiated building multiple public schools, whereas there used to be no opportunity at receiving education for the people living in Palabek.

"[...] Before there was no school in this area. Now NGOs give trainings to our community, and I have received education because I got to go to secondary school which would never have happened if the refugees weren't here." -Interviewee 9 (04-04-2023)

The construction of schools has offered many people to receive education, but there have also been extra benefits offered to host communities. NGOs give free trainings and programs to educate the communities, and some NGOs offer to pay school fees to allow children to receive education. In combination with schools, the NGOs also offer a lot of trainings for host communities to receive knowledge and skills. It has empowered the communities to self-



Figure 8 training given by YOMU to a host community

sufficiency and are given for free to allow as many people as possible to receive the benefits, which is achieved through cross-organisational cooperation.

"[...] I have gotten a lot of trainings from NGOs, like YOMU. The most important skills that I have learned from these are how to plant vegetables and how to utilise small spaces of land for a lot of crops. Also, a training in nursery beds has been very helpful so far. I have greatly improved in these skills because of the trainings." -Interviewee 11 (04-04-2023)

There are multiple sectors in which NGOs can be active, of which the biggest are: health, livelihood, education, and law. Numerous NGOs are active within each sector, which cooperate on some projects, but often also have individual projects and trainings. YOMU, the organisation that facilitated this research, falls under the livelihood branch. The extensive system in which the NGOs operate ensure a variety of trainings and programs of all sectors reach the refugees and host communities. This cooperation between institutions is essential for successful humanitarian aid in the long run, according to the literature review (Carciotto & Ferraro, 2020; Deng, 2021; Huang et al., 2023; Mabunda Baluku et al., 2021; Matovu et al., 2021). However, the current situation in Palabek shows a lack of collaboration between institutions, as the inequitable status of the land rearrangement and the general sentiment of second-rank citizens amongst host communities is a prime example. It stresses the importance of collaborated response on local, national, and international level even more, to stimulate and support social cohesion between communities and institutions (Deng, 2021; Moorthy & Brathwaite, 2019; O’Byrne & Ogeno, 2021). The data also showcased the diversity of the NGOs and the extent to which the host communities reap its benefits. The smaller NGOs are often specialised in one working sector, such as education, healthcare, or livelihood. The culmination of the trainings received by the beneficiaries -both host communities and refugees- create a comprehensive and extensive spectrum of skills acquired. Other NGOs focus more on developing the area through social services rather than teachings, such as at the IRC.

“At IRC, the International Rescue Committee, I am a health project officer. This mainly includes the surveillance of vaccinatable diseases in the area, for which I am largely responsible. Especially polio, we track that around the area and keep an eye out for any possible outbreaks that might occur. Currently I work with 23 health units together, which is a lot.” -Interview IRC (03-05-2023)

This quote is indicative of how the NGOs interact with host communities and refugees, and what their role is in the area. Tracking vaccinatable diseases and having a vaccination program established in Palabek minimises the risks of outbreaks, and thereby reduces the need for



Figure 9 improved, sustainable rabbit cages. The excrement of the rabbits is caught and used to create fertiliser. One of the improved techniques learned by host communities

host communities to go to hospitals. It creates a stronger sense of safety, according to the respondents. Also, the communication between the institutions involved, such as IRC and local hospitals, increases general health, emphasising the need for collaboration as concluded by the literature review. Teachings also have major impacts on the livelihood, as agricultural NGOs

such as YOMU stimulate advancements in the field of farming. This is achieved through trainings on sustainability, efficiency, new equipment, new techniques, or alternative crops. The advancements made within farming in Palabek are remarkable and are also responsible for the economic growth that can be seen. The improved efficiency and new techniques in farming allow host communities and refugees to increase their production and sell excess crops, which is in turn facilitated by the establishment of new markets, as disclosed previously. The view of host community members on the advancements in farming are solely positive: they offer more opportunities for them to exploit their lands efficiently and sustainably and empowers them too.

As the presence of IRC shows, the demand for medicine and health care increases alongside the rise in population. The different aspects of development have also aided the health institutions in the area: health units and hospitals are built, and an ambulance is able to attend those in need via the road system in place. The increase in staff has been noticed too. Especially in comparison to before the influx, the general increase in hospitals and health units has made the accessibility better for the host communities. The increase in population has also increased the demand and pressure for medical care, according to the host communities. This difference in quality hasn't gone unnoticed in other areas either. The hygiene has improved drastically, with sanitation being one of the spearpoints of the UN healthcare administration in the area, according to the data. This aligns with Price (2020), who states that poor water usage and sanitation is one of the leading factors preventing long-term habitation in the refugee camps due to the quick population increase. This claim is confirmed by Huang et al. (2023) who state that current policies on issues as such need to be refined in order to prove high effectiveness.

However, the already mentioned sentiment of second-class citizens is also an issue here: most hospitals and health units are built with the refugees in mind, redirecting the host communities literally to the back of the line. The interviews have shown many host community members are either treated last or not at all, due to the lack of a special exemption status the refugees receive upon arrival in Uganda. This status however cannot be found in official documents, but host communities have clearly stated their worse societal position opposed to the refugees is what led to these situations. It does add on to the previously explored sentiment of second-rank citizens and could have detrimental effects on the social cohesion.

Similarly, there were also mixed reactions when asked about the resource of clothing and its access- and availability. There is a lot more supply for clothes in the area, making it generally easier to access the clothes for host communities. Again, the access roads and extra markets have made the accessibility easier, thus saves people a lot of time which can be spent else (d'Errico et al., 2022). However, aside from the positive influences, negative points could be derived from the data as well. In most interviews the rise of prices came forward. This was a direct consequence of the refugees, according to the interviewees. However, it is also confirmed that there is a general increase in business as well, allowing people to earn more money to spend on commodities. It is a trade-off mechanism in which the opinions in the host communities appear divided.

*“For clothes there are new markets which are a lot closer than the old ones, but the prices have gone up. So it is easier to get to the markets, but harder to get the clothes themselves.”
-Interviewee 15 (05-04-2023)*

The accessibility in terms of trading for clothes and other commodities has become easier, better infrastructure and multiple, more frequent markets have ensured a broad supply of commodities. However, the data showed that the increased population and competition has driven up prices. This makes it essentially more difficult to buy clothes as it has become more expensive. It forces people to work more, or at least earn extra money in order to afford clothes.

The interviewees appoint the competition increase as the largest reason behind the price increase. The population boomed from an estimated <10.000 people to over 75.000 in a few years, which has inevitable consequences (UNHCR, 2021). It is visible in the data, although there is not one comprehensive consensus on the competition. Although the population undeniably has increased massively, so have the institutions and general development in the area. This is why the view on competition of host communities varies between people and each experience.

“There is a lot of competition due to the overpopulation in the area. However, before there was always too little food and water, so generally the situation is better, even with the extra competition.” -Interviewee 3 (31-03-2023)

In conclusion however, the quote above shows what view most people maintain derived from the data. It is a culmination of both the developments and the challenges the influx has brought about in regard to the availability and accessibility of resources and commodities. The process of developments and challenges instigated by the influx of refugees underlines the complex dynamics of resource availability and accessibility in the area. The establishment of new markets has created opportunities for economic growth and diversification, whilst also bolstering social cohesion among communities. Enhanced access to markets not only facilitates trade but also provides alternative food sources, contributing to improved diets and diversity. Additionally, improved infrastructure, including hospitals and health units, has improved access to essential services, further enhancing the quality of life for both locals as well as refugees. However, amidst these positives, challenges persist, particularly concerning affordability. The rise in prices, driven by increased competition, poses a significant hurdle for many in the host communities, impacting their livelihoods. Moreover, the perception of inequitable treatment, compounded by issues such as preferential access to healthcare, increases tensions between locals and refugees and enlarges the second-rank citizen sentiment amongst the host communities.

Addressing the broader question of services, it is evident that while there have been both positive and negative repercussions, the overall landscape has undergone significant transformation. The establishment of markets and improved infrastructure has expanded economic opportunities but emphasises the need for continued support to ensure equitable access to resources for all inhabitants. Furthermore, the pivotal role of the UN and NGOs cannot be overstated in driving these transformations. Their interventions, ranging from educational initiatives to healthcare programs, have been instrumental in empowering individuals and communities. It also showcases the importance of cooperation on all levels in

order to achieve long-term goals and development. The efforts of all stakeholders need to be direct to shared goals, to address the disparities between the host communities and refugees and move toward a more inclusive and supportive environment for Palabek and all its inhabitants.

Social cohesion

In order to properly examine and assess the influences of the refugee influx, the personal experiences cannot be ignored. The goal of the Ugandan government is long-term habitation of the refugees in Palabek and the rest of Uganda, emphasising the importance of integration between refugees and host communities. Thus, sub-question 4: “What are the personal experiences the host communities have endured with the refugees?” needs to be answered before proper assessment can be executed. However, the data continuously exposed a certain sentiment host communities experience regarding their position in relation to the refugees. Multiple interviewees have confirmed they feel as though they are put in a disadvantageous position opposed to the refugees, because the refugees are being prioritised in multiple ways according to the host communities. This has been felt in multiple ways, for instance at the previously mentioned hospitals, and prohibited host communities from developing in the same way as the refugees according to the data.

“There is police around, but they are siding with the refugees all the time. We cannot come to them about our crops being stolen or gardens destroyed, because they will choose the side of the refugees. [...] We have a lot of competition for medical care with the refugees. Also there are health units within the settlement, newly constructed, but they are only for refugees and not for us.” -Interviewee 4 (03-04-2023)

“Don’t send them [the refugees] away, they should stay. But the government and NGOs do need to realise our position. Government and the NGOs should help us too, as hosts, because we help the refugees. Do not only focus on them, we need it too.” -Interviewee 25 (20-04-2023)

The upper quotes show what the sentiment is amongst host communities about their societal position. This was a topic of discussion in almost all interviews, emphasising the severity of the issue. The second quote ‘we help the refugees’ aims at the lands given away for free to refugees, although it must be noted that not every host community did this voluntarily. However, this doesn’t change the resentment the locals feel toward the refugees over their lost land. The respondents indicate a clear prioritisation of refugees over them, the host communities, and this is most visible with medical care and medicine distribution. Refugees are attended to first, and sometimes solely attended to. This heavily damages the social cohesion, as the competition between the communities is not beneficial for their coexistence. The increase in competition created by the refugees, in combination with the loss on benefits received, has left the host communities often in a vulnerable position. The government has legal responsibility over them, yet the data indicates that the host communities are often neglected by the Ugandan government, and more aided by the NGOs. This could possibly be attributed to the 70:30 principle, explained below by the FRC:

“We teach both refugees and host communities, although we allocate more classes to the refugees. We have a 70:30 policy, where 30 is the percentage for host communities. Some groups that receive lessons are mixed, others are separated between their respective communities.” -Interview FRC (04-05-2023)

This policy is created by the Ugandan government to ensure that at least 30% of all activities and benefits are aimed at host communities, so they are not neglected in comparison to the refugees. Strangely enough, the data shows that it is the Ugandan government that doesn't follow their own policy. It is a stockpile of issues and neglect: land given away to refugees, leading to less harvests, refugees getting food rations, rising food prices due to extra population. The government is the institution responsible for its own citizens – the host communities- but fails to address the problem in host communities' eyes. The literature review already indicated a possibility in which refugees are clearly prioritised over host communities, and multiple studies have shown the burdens it can put on communities to host refugees (Ahimbisibwe, 2019; Deng, 2021; O'Byrne, 2022). This should be urgently addressed, and the 70:30 principle revised, as both fieldwork and literature review have already proven its ineffectiveness (Dijkzeul, 2021; UNHCR, 2018). The sentiment of a neglecting government is broadly carried amongst the host communities, as multiple have indicated to having reached out to the government previously but getting no response. There have been largely negative feelings about the reachability of the government amongst the respondents.

“[...] We can now contact the NGOs that work in the area. They act as a contact person for us, and they can link us through easily. Also with better access roads it is easier to get at the sub-county office than before.” -Interviewee 19 (19-04-2023)

This quote is indicative of what the host communities have to do in order to contact the government, as directly contacting the government is often unsuccessful. However, the accessibility through the road network has made the physical access easier. This is why some interviewees do recognise the improvements made to the accessibility, and especially notice the difference before and after the refugee influx. The general consensus is that the situation is better than before, mainly because it couldn't have been worse. This is seen as the lion's share of interviewees is positive about the refugees. They bring development and prosperity to the area by attracting the larger institutions. There is a lot more business, infrastructure, schools, and general opportunities for everybody in Palabek, which would never have been achieved without refugees, according to the respondents. However, there have been a few members stating they preferred the area without the refugees. This was often in response to losing harvests or crops due to theft by the refugees, and the increase in population is also not desired by everyone. It is an exception though, as most of the host communities were acceptant of the refugees, but did hold a similar sentiment like described below:

“I feel like I have no problem with them, but I think that they need a lot of counselling. This will help them learn how to behave and understand our culture.” -Interviewee 22 (19-04-2023)

Respondents did feel like the more time had passed, the more opportunities people had to integrate and interact with each other, sometimes leading to friendships and acquaintances. The combined programs and trainings of NGOs also helped in strengthening social cohesion.

This could resolve the issues perceived by some interviewees on the refugees, as integration is a pivotal path toward acceptance.

Although the overarching sentiment amongst respondents was positive when directly asked about their view on the refugees, it was also not shared among all in their community. This cannot be seen separately from the feeling of second-rank citizens that host communities experience in relation to the refugees. The previously discussed 70:30 principle in place helps host communities in the sense that NGOs put 30% of their focus on them. However, this hasn't resolved the issue of a negligent government, which is how the host communities view the Ugandan government. Host communities often feel marginalised and disadvantaged, perceiving a lack of equitable treatment in comparison to refugees. Issues such as competition for resources, preferential treatment in medical care, and perceived neglect by governmental institutions have increased existing grievances among the host communities. The 70:30 policy has been inconsistently implemented, with host communities feeling overlooked by the Ugandan government. This has led the host communities to turn to NGOs as intermediaries due to perceived difficulties in engaging directly with the government. It is evident that while there have been positive developments in education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities, challenges remain in ensuring equitable treatment and resource allocation for host communities. The need for greater collaboration and accountability between the government, NGOs, and host communities is essential to address these disparities and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all inhabitants of Palabek.

In conclusion, the personal experiences of host communities with the influx of refugees into Palabek provide valuable insights into the dynamics of integration and coexistence. The sentiment among host communities towards refugees is primarily positive, with many acknowledging the contributions refugees have made to the area, including development, prosperity, and increased opportunities. However, alongside this positivity, there is also the perceived neglect by governmental institutions. Some members of host communities express concerns about the behaviour of refugees and advocate for greater support and counselling to facilitate better integration and understanding of cultural norms. As previously mentioned, also the neglect of issues of the police adds to this sentiment. This has to be addressed directly, as the sentiment will not change if there is no action undertaken. It should come from the government, as NGOs already act as a middleman, and this especially is a form of neglect perceived by the locals. Despite these challenges, there are indications of progress over time, with interactions between host communities and refugees leading to increased understanding and even friendships. Additionally, the efforts of NGOs in providing programs and trainings have helped bridge gaps and create a sense of social and communal cohesion. It is clear that while there are complexities and challenges, overall, the sentiment towards refugees is one of acceptance and recognition of their contributions. However, ongoing efforts are needed to address underlying tensions and ensure equitable treatment and support for all residents of Palabek, fostering a harmonious and inclusive community in the long run.

Chapter 6 | Conclusion

This study set out to answer four sub-questions, in order to draw a final conclusion to the central research question: “What are the effects of the South Sudanese refugee influx on the livelihoods of the host communities in and around the Palabek refugee settlement?” The data showed that the South Sudanese refugee influx has had a positive economic influence on the livelihoods of the host communities in Palabek, but subsequently also created a social disparity between the refugees and locals. This overshadows the developments gained in the area, and could possibly lead to resentment, undesirable for long-term coexistence. This chapter will give concluding remarks on each of the sub-questions and a brief, final answer to the central research question concludes this study. The limitations of the study will also be discussed, as well as recommendations for future research. This chapter will be concluded with a reflection on the research process.

How are the host communities affected by the influx of South Sudanese refugees in their work life?

The livelihood of the host communities in Palabek could be considered common by rural Ugandan standards. Their income is dependent on their farming for own consumption and small-scale trading of their crops on the side. The communities are tight, but the life is harsh considering the climate and rural area they live in. The host communities are most affected in their work life through the loss of their land. This has limited their options and freedom in farming, requiring innovative solutions to the newly arisen problems. The strains the influx and added population has put on the environment is noticeable. The diminishing natural resources such as firewood are a direct consequence of the deforestation in the area. However, the installation of numerous water taps has improved water accessibility and removed the endless search, thus saving host communities lots of time. Overall, there have been changes, but it has been overwhelmingly positive and stimulated development for the host communities.

How has a change in safety affected the host communities?

The influx has changed Palabek significantly in terms of safety. Theft has increased, as has the population. The correlation has not been explored extensively enough to determine a causal relationship or a relative increase in theft. However, it has led host communities to establish security teams in order to diminish the effects. This was a direct response to the inattentive and biased police force according to the respondents. This has stimulated the sense of a negligent government toward the host communities in their eyes, decreasing the social coherence and slightly increasing resentment toward refugees.

How has the refugee influx affected the access to services in the area?

The number of services available has increased dramatically in Palabek. Hospitals, schools, markets, and infrastructure has made lots of resources available and increased the variety of choice. These are so inherently intertwined with one another that it increases in both quality and quantity cumulatively. As one increases, so does the other. The economic prosperity the influx has brought has greatly improved the quality of life. However, all this is overshadowed by the sentiment that host communities are treated as second-class citizens. This is especially visible in the treatment they receive at hospital queues and government benefits. This feeling however is mostly aimed at the government, as the host communities feel it should be the

government's responsibility to improve their quality of life, and not be reliant on NGOs and the UN.

What are personal encounters the host communities have experienced with the refugees?

The host communities show little resentment to the refugees. The small amount of resentment is often not aimed at the refugees directly, but at their presence leading to the feeling of second-rank citizens. The host communities often state the demand for education for the refugees in order to aid them and thereby themselves. This does show the affection the communities feel for the refugees, as they believe in change and bridging the gaps. This would in turn improve social and communal cohesion, and perhaps decrease the second-rank citizen sentiment.

“What are the effects of the South Sudanese refugee influx on the livelihoods of the host communities in and around the Palabek refugee settlement?”

This case study of Palabek shows that the two most important consequences of the refugee influx on the livelihoods are the improved services and second-rank citizen sentiment. The literature already suggested an improve in general development, as a refugee influx often increases trading in proximity to the camp. The literature also suggested a possible rise in tensions as the population increases and local communities miss out on benefits. However, the ripple effect this has on the host communities is left unexplored. This research shows that the developments achieved in an area are overshadowed by the second-rank sentiment amongst host communities, negating the accomplishments. However, the data also indicated that there is a rather singular focus on the government's neglect by the host communities, as they feel the government is primarily at fault. The academic debate fails to display this at all, including the extent to which this sentiment is carried. The government is responsible for all its citizens and inhabitants, albeit refugees or host communities. This study shows how a government can handle a certain policy -such as the open-door policy- whilst neglecting the consequences the maintenance of this policy bears. This particular policy shows the willingness of the country to aid people in need, and also shows this preparedness to the international community. However, the Ugandan government fails to accommodate for their own inhabitants living in the area, an aspect that is often overlooked by the international community in their policies and funds. Preferably, if similar cases occur, local communities should be included in all possible funds and aid packages up front. Calculating them into the policies written as if they are refugees themselves: removing all disparities between the groups and preventing possible resentments and inequities. This also facilitates long-term peaceful coexistence, benefitting both the local and the refugee communities, and thereby enhancing social cohesion.

Effects on societal and academic debate

The answers to the sub- and central research questions have been found, yet how does this research position itself within the academic debate and what social implications can be learned from this thesis? The current academic literature shows no regard for the major social implications that the refugee influx has: the second-rank citizen sentiment amongst host communities. This could create a ripple effect and damage the faith people have in their government. In turn, it could eventually even lead to resistance and uprisings if not addressed in time. The extent to which this sentiment is carried, and the shadow it casts over the other

developments that have been achieved in the area, is seriously overlooked by the academic literature. Future research could pose questions such as ‘what is your view on the government, how can the government improve your relationship, which steps should the government undertake in order to stimulate local governance and voice, and how can the shared sentiment be addressed accordingly?’ The difference in benefits received by ethnic groups also creates a -perhaps unknown- disparity between the groups and could instigate constraints and eventually resentment. This can again escalate into more serious consequences, and lead to almost institutionalised discrimination. Even if it doesn’t escalate that far, host communities might feel as if they are being discriminated, which still leads to a similar outcome. The academic world would benefit from more research regarding this consequence of a refugee influx on local communities.

The lessons that can be drawn from this research for the local NGOs in Uganda is that the disparity between the two ethnic groups needs to be addressed and acknowledged. The 70:30 principle is a good start, but currently not effective enough. More integration and collaborative trainings would increase social cohesion and strengthen the community feel. The host communities are already open to integration but require more external incentive to engage in social activities with refugees, as it cannot be purely one-sided. It requires more effort from alternative parties, such as NGOs, the UN, the government and the refugees themselves. The government should stop prioritising the refugees to a ridiculous extent and acknowledge the situation their own citizens are living in. Provide them with the same aid packages as the refugees receive, as both communities are struggling in a similar situation and environment.

To conclude, this research shows that the developments achieved alongside a refugee influx does not compare to the second-rank citizen sentiment the host communities experience. The academic debate neglects this effect, and it requires more extensive research in order to investigate all causes, what can be done to prevent it and how to resolve it. The negative effect of the second-rank citizen sentiment does not outweigh the positive effects of the developments, but it is continuously mentioned by the host communities, indicating that it is an underlying, troublesome feeling which could manifest itself in their communal views on the (sub)national politics and governance, and could escalate to crushing consequences in the long-term.

Limitations of the study

The circumstances under which this study was conducted has posed its limitations. The limitations however need to be placed in the context of time and space in which the research was conducted. The first and foremost limitation is the depth of analysis in relation to the collected data during the fieldwork. The lack of internet access and books made it difficult to reflect on the data collected during the fieldwork process. This encumbered the development of theories during fieldwork based on recently acquired data.

Secondly, the time constraints pose a limitation to the study. It is impossible to measure the true effects of long-term coexistence and effects of a refugee influx after a short period of time. As the intention of the Ugandan government is long-term habitation in the area by the refugees, the current effects could be in line with the desired goals, but this cannot be confirmed with certainty. As mentioned previously, the context of the research affects the scope with which the alterations are observed. In order to capture the broader scope of the context and the emerging phenomena, longevity is required, which this study lacks.

Another limitation is the bad accessibility of the respondents. Because of the limited time, resources, and funds it was difficult to reach the respondents. In order to preserve the validity, it would have been better to interview more host community members. However, the reachability of the communities was obstructed by the bad roads, which were even worse after two o'clock since the daily heavy rain would worsen the roads even more.

In addition to the bad accessibility of the interviewees, my positionality as researcher was undoubtedly a limiting factor too. Being a white, western, male researcher attracts inevitable attention. Although I have attempted to limit the impact of my positionality, it was still noticeable in the field. People would come up to me just to touch me, or refugees would yell or curse at me for being white. The latter happened multiple times whilst arriving on-site, which will certainly have had an influence on the interviewees' opinions of me. Also, because of the limited time, I was unable to gain trust through familiarity, which might have obstructed the respondents in sharing certain feelings given my skin colour. Unfortunately, this was inevitable, but it should be taken into consideration.

Alas, this research lacks the perspective of the refugees. Even though the research question is formulated in a way that doesn't require refugee interviews, it would have been a great addition for the validity of the research. However, the language barrier made the interviews impossible, as the refugees primarily spoke Arabic and I was unable to find an Arabic translator. But my translator Daniel provided me with the opportunity to conduct interviews in Acholi. However, since there are little direct translations between Acholi and English, some meanings and messages get lost in the translation. This might have blurred the outcome of the interviews.

Recommendations for future research

Topics for future studies could include economic effects of a refugee influx on the broader metropolitan area. In order to understand the extent to which the economic effects ripple through to the hosting communities, the scope needs to be broadened to include a large group of possible beneficiaries. These studies could take place in any Sub-Saharan African country. Also, the effects of good and poor cooperation between institutions could be studied specifically. This research has shown there are some relations between the efficiency of the cooperation and the beneficial effects host communities experience. However, the extent of these impacts is unknown and require thorough, specific research to answer. The results of research in this aspect could contain meaningful information for the creation of policies in order to enhance social coherency and stimulate local economies for long-term coexistence.

As mentioned, future research could broaden the lens with which it viewed these effects. Also, the incorporation of refugees into the data would provide an interesting insight in their ideas and opinions on what could be altered / how they influence the area, even when they don't have a point of reference like the host communities. The current study heavily relies on the one-sided approach of host communities, with a few exceptions regarding the key interviews with NGOs. This does obstruct the comprehensiveness of the results as the refugees also play a key role in the effects. Studies like these could be conducted in any Sub-Saharan refugee camp.

Future research might also try to adopt a stakeholder analysis as method, in which the social dynamics and relations between stakeholders are examined. One of the largest results this research has uncovered is the interplay between the stakeholders and the extent to which

this influences the overall moods amongst local communities. Follow-up research could provide explanations on how this evolves and what can be done to prevent issues and improve social cohesion. The triangular relationship between refugees, host communities and the relevant government could expose the impacts it has on the true effects and long-term habitation. This research could also be conducted in any Sub-Saharan refugee camp. Using a stakeholder analysis but retaining a case study approach could still maintain the transferability to other cases. The results could perhaps be valuable to similar refugee camps with comparable economic status and climate.

Also, within the context of an interconnected, interrelated, and globalised world the role of the international communities could be examined more closely, which would be an interesting approach to how the institutions cooperate. It might uncover the incentives and geopolitical issues at stake within a refugee influx/camp, which this research currently lacks.

Reflection

This section reflects upon the chosen method -grounded theory approach-, the execution of the research and a personal reflection on the experiences of the researcher.

What went well

Methodological approach | Although the execution of the fieldwork and data collection was limited in several aspects, the selected research method was on par with the expectations. The grounded theory approach allowed the flexibility in the field for adjustments. This was especially useful for the open interviews in which certain themes could emerge, requiring deeper questions and analysis accordingly.

Research execution | The execution of the fieldwork worked out great. Although there were some obstacles as mentioned in the limitations section, the data collection went as well as could have been expected. The cooperation with the team of YOMU was great, and the accommodation was within the refugee camp, necessary because of the accessibility and remoteness of the communities. My translator and companion, Daniel, helped me in many instances. The cooperation with him was great, as he knew the ins and outs of the area and the research was always the highest priority. Because of his familiarity and knowledge of the area, he often did suggestions for the research in order to obtain the most valid results. He was also a known figure around the area, since he worked for YOMU and did lots of voluntary work on the side, such as playing in a band at the church or building a school. Because of his familiar face, people were much more eager to talk to me than they would have been without him next to me. Also, he drove me around the area on a motorcycle and informed me on the possibilities for interviews during the day, as we had to keep the weather, trainings, and other factors in mind. For these reasons we were able to collect as much interviews as possible within the limitations.

What could've gone better

Methodological approach | As mentioned, the chosen methodology has worked out for the most part. However, a proper grounded theory approach demands time, which was limited in this form of research. Extended ethnographic fieldwork offers greater analysis to build a foundation for the grounded theory approach, but I was not able to achieve this within this timeframe. The longevity of a refugee influx and the impacts it has in the long run cannot be

measured in such a short period of time. This weakens the validity of the study, and in hindsight another method might have been a better option, such as a stakeholder analysis.

Research execution | The inductive approach of the method relies on the continuous analysis and comparison of data and theory, in order to proceed. The research proposal of this thesis proved to contain inadequate theoretical depth, which created problems in the field in terms of analysis. It may have interfered with the course of the theory developed, and thereby weakened the construction of the theory through grounded theory approach. Also, the limited availability of theory and internet encumbered the ability to catch up on theory in the field. However, both problems could have been prevented and were a result of an inadequate preparing phase. In future research, the preparatory and planning phase should be perfected before doing fieldwork, because its much more efficient and creates a stronger, valid foundation for the results obtained.

Personal experiences | My positionality has, as mentioned, posed a few limitations within the research. This was especially noticeable with the culture difference between my nationality - Dutch- and the Ugandan ways. Small talk is done very differently, and inherently completely different topics were used to make small talk. I thought of this as an important aspect in the research as I want my interviewees to be comfortable and trusting of me, hence why I tried to engage in small talk beforehand and in the field. After practicing it got better, but the time spend in Uganda was too short to completely delve into their culture.

On top of this, the religious gap between me and the Ugandan people was remarkable too and could again be attributed to a huge difference in culture. Although I have attended church each Sunday and met up with people there to socialise, I myself was uncomfortable with the unfamiliarity I had with the church.

Lastly, the difference in general life tempo required a lot of patience and adjusting for me as a researcher. As a European, I am used to living fast and often being in a hurry. Time is kept very well in the Netherlands, and it is considered rude to make someone wait on you and waste their time. In Uganda, appointments are often made based on loose assumptions of time. More often than not we would meet up with people in the afternoon, without any clue what time exactly. However, these inconveniences were sorted by my companion and friend Daniel, who as a Ugandan native was able to explain all differences and misunderstandings between me and others. I was able to familiarise myself with the Ugandan culture, reducing my positionality and biases. This allowed me to build trusting relationships in the short time period and offered lots of insights which I would not have been able to obtain without Daniels help. There were essentially no shortcomings in my collaboration with Daniel, so I can merely look back on a positive cooperation. Therefore, I have to conclude that this study and future studies cannot be conducted without the company of at least one national resident who is willing to aid the researcher in various ways.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Interview no.	Date interview conducted	Background information
1	31-03-2023	Male, 30, farmer. Household of 6.
2	31-03-2023	Male, 23, farmer. Household of 3.
3	31-03-2023	Male, 24, retail shop owner. Farms on the side. Household of 2.
4	03-04-2023	Female, 26, farmer. Household of 3.
5	03-04-2023	Male, 26, farmer. Household of 9.
6	03-04-2023	Female, 26, small business owner. Farms on the side. Household of 6.
7	03-04-2023	Female, 23, farmer. Household of 4.
8	03-04-2023	Female, 59, farmer. Household of 13.
9	04-04-2023	Female, 25, small business owner. Farms on the side. Household of 4.
10	04-04-2023	Female, 28, farmer. Household of 5.
11	04-04-2023	Female 27, farmer. Small business on the side. Household of 13.
12	04-04-2023	Female, 28, famer. Small business on the side. Household of 7.
13	04-04-2023	Male, 24, mechanic. Farms on the side. Household of 3.
14	04-04-2023	Male, 28, farmer. Household of 5.
15	05-04-2023	Male, 24, farmer. Household of 4.
16	05-04-2023	Female, 21, farmer. Household of 6.
17	05-04-2023	Female, 26, farmer. Household of 11.
18	05-04-2023	Female, 31, wholesale shop owner. Farms on the side. Household of 3.
19	19-04-2023	Male, 27, farmer. Household of 3.
20	19-04-2023	Female, 20, farmer. Small business on the side. Household of 3.
21	19-04-2023	Female, 21, farmer. Household of 5.
22	19-04-2023	Male, 25, community-based trainer at YOMU. Farms on the side. Household of 3.
23	19-04-2023	Female, 50, farmer. Small business on the side. Household of 14.
24	19-04-2023	Female, 25, farmer. Small business on the side. Household of 9.
25	20-04-2023	Female, 62, farmer and area councillor Palabek Kal sub-county. Secretary production Mo sub-county. Household of 5.
26	20-04-2023	Male, 64, farmer. Household of 8.

27	20-04-2023	Female, 35, farmer. Small business on the side. Household of 6.
28	20-04-2023	Female, 35, farmer. Small business on the side. Household of 8.
29	20-04-2023	Male, 23, barber. Farms on the side. Household of 7.
30	20-04-2023	Male, 23, farmer. Household of 3.

NGO	Date interview conducted	Background information
IRC	03-05-2023	International Rescue Committee. Multinational NGO that specialises in humanitarian aid in crises.
LWF	03-05-2023	Lutheran World Federation. Provides emergency assistance in primarily sanitation and hygiene. Judicial fights are also settled through free judicial aid and advice.
Seed Effect	03-05-2023	Seed Effect. Gives financial trainings and aims to eventually create financial security. Work from Evangelist principles.
FRC	04-05-2023	Finnish Refugee Council. Gives educational lessons, amongst others English for adults.
RLP	04-05-2023	Refugee Law Project. Institution from a Ugandan law university. Addresses and raises awareness on impacts of climate change. Advocate for refugee rights.
RUFI	04-05-2023	Rural Finance Initiative. Provides loans to stimulate entrepreneurship and businesses.

Appendix II

Guiding questions NGO interviews

Basic information

- Name:
- Gender:
- Age:
- Number of household members:
- Job:
- Other main daily activities:
- Organisation:

Organisation

1. At which organisation do you work? What kind of work do you do/why was it established?
2. How is your organisation involved with the host communities?
3. How is your organisation involved with the refugees?
4. Has your organisation been able to achieve its goals (& what are those goals)

Personal

1. Have you personally experienced a difference in the lives of the host communities?
 - a. Have you seen a difference in safety in the area?
 - b. Have you seen a difference in access to resources? (Food, water, clothes & medicine)
 - c. Have you seen a difference regarding institutions in the area?
2. What are the most influential changes since the refugees have arrived in this area?
3. What is the competition like between host communities and refugees?
4. Could you name an example of how the host communities have been affected by the refugee influx?

Guiding questions host community interviews

Basic information

- Gender:
- Age:
- Number of household members:
- Job:
- Other main daily activities:

Work effects

1. Have you personally been affected by the arrival of the refugees in the area? If so, how?
2. Are you still able to provide for your family?
 - a. Has this changed since the refugee influx?
3. Is your job still the same?
4. Are you able to perform your job?

Safety

1. Have you personally experienced a difference in safety due to the refugee influx? Has it improved or worsened?
2. Is there enough police to serve all of you? Do you think there should be more or less police?
3. Have you experienced more or less violence or no difference after the refugee influx?

Access to resources

1. Before the refugee influx, did you always have access to resources (which are enough food, water, clothing, medicine, etc)?
 - a. Has this changed in any way?
2. How was it to get food and water before the refugees? Is there more competition for the resources now?

Institutions

1. Prior to the refugee influx, were there enough policemen?
 - a. Are there enough policemen now? To serve you and your family?
2. Prior to the refugee influx, was there enough room for medical care for you?
 - a. Has this changed with the arrival of the refugees? Is there more or less room for you? Do you compete with the refugees?
3. Can you access the government easily?
 - a. Has this situation differed in the last 10 years?

Personal experiences and perceptions:

1. Have you personally been affected by the refugees? How?
2. What is your view on the refugees?

Idea of general effects

1. Have you seen a difference in your community?
2. Has the arrival of refugees changed anything in your community?
3. Does your community all share the same opinion on the refugees? Do you share it?

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Agreement to participate in safety of Palabek research project

Effect of the refugee influx on the Palabek refugee settlement camp and surrounding host communities

Thank you for taking the time to consider my safety research project. I am at your disposal for any questions you might have.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gather data on the effects of the refugee influx on the host communities in this area.

Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked several questions through an interview. The main use of the information you provide will help me to draw a conclusion on the effects of the refugee influx on the livelihoods of the host communities, and hopefully use it to improve the current situation. The interview will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Risks, discomforts and Benefits

There are no risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. The benefits of participating in this study include the potential for contributing to the understanding of effects of a refugee influx in an area, and how the hosting communities can best cope with it in order to improve the situation for both refugees and the hosting area.

Anonymity

Your participation in this study will be kept strictly anonymous. Your name will not be associated with any data collected. The data collected from the interviews will be used for my research project.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate, or you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the research privacy, the treatment of research participants or this study project, please contact Bart de Valk at +31636095830 or bartdevalk99@hotmail.com. If you have any complaints regarding the research or the researcher, you may contact the supervisor Flora Aling at Youth Movers Uganda or any associate of that organisation.

I can confirm that (please tick box):

- I have read and understand the information sheet and consent form of this research project.
- I have had the opportunity to discuss this study. I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.
- I agree that my participation in this research project is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study until the moment that the study has been published, and to decline to answer any individual questions in the study without needing to say why.
- I understand I will not be paid for my participation.
- I understand I can ask questions at any point during, before or after the activity about any aspect of the research.
- I understand that I can request any [texts/photos/etc.] with identifiable features to be blurred, made non-identifiable or removed from the research.
- I understand that the data collected for this study will be kept confidentially either in a locked facility or as a password-protected encrypted file on a password-protected computer of the researcher. [If applicable: Audio files or transcripts will be removed after the completion of the research].
- I understand that the information collected for this study will be used only for research purposes only, such as a MSc thesis, articles, book chapters, published and unpublished work and presentations (if relevant).
- I consent to my [interview/focus group discussion] being audio-recorded [if relevant], and understand I have the right to ask for the audio-recorder to be turned off at any time.
- I understand that my name will not be used on any documents, presentations or other output of the research.
- [A pseudonym of my own choosing can be used in this research: _____]

“I agree to participate in this individual research project and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the research project information sheet.”

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

“I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet and I ensure to minimise harm done to any participant during this research.”

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Please fill in the following information. It will only be used in case you want to be sent a copy of interview notes and/or transcripts [so that you have the opportunity to make corrections; if relevant].

Address: _____

Email: _____

Appendix IV

Code tree:

1. Destruction of land
 - a. Stealing of crops
 - b. Deforestation
2. Land loss
3. Progress/advancements in farming

4. Police force overwhelmed
5. Security lights
6. Increase in violence because of refugees
 - a. Reduction of violence
 - b. Rudeness of refugees
 - c. Domestic violence (sometimes in relation to refugees)

7. Water taps
8. Newly constructed roads
9. More education(al opportunities)
10. Government access

11. Markets / ability to trade
 - a. Business improving
12. Price increase
13. Medicine accessibility
 - a. More medical centres
 - b. More doctors
 - c. Wait at medical centres
 - d. Quality difference
14. Clothes accessibility
15. Competition increase

16. Trainings and benefits received from NGOs & UN
17. Refugees prioritised

18. Personally likes refugees
19. Personally dislikes refugees
20. Variety in liking toward refugees in his/her community